

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Bolshevism vs. class collaboration:
Answer to YCL's defense of Popular Front
—PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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U.S. real wages fell in 2004, continuing 30-year decline

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

The real wages of working people in the United States, which have been on an overall downward curve for 30 years, fell again in 2004.

The intensifying drive by the employers, factory by factory and industry by industry, to push down wages, increase the differentiation among wage earners, and dilute seniority is the underlying cause of this decline. This offensive by the bosses takes its toll in the steady grinding away at conditions in housing, health care, and other aspects of workers' basic standard of living.

Many of the newspapers that reported on this, from the *New York Times* to the *Los Angeles Times*, placed the blame for the pay cut on inflation rather than the bosses. In fact, the 2.7 percent rise in the cost of living last year was modest in comparison to the double-digit inflation of the late 1970s. During the period of capitalist expansion

from 1947 to 1973, average real wages rose substantially, despite periods of greater inflation. But in 2004 stagnating wages did not keep pace with the rise in prices, producing a decline in the purchasing power of workers in this country of about half a percent.

In seeking to boost their profit margins, more and more employers have been unable to count on anything other than freezing and driving down wages, lengthening the workweek, and intensifying labor. This stretchout and speedup is the secret behind the productivity "miracle" pointed to by Federal Reserve Bank president Alan Greenspan and others. "We're in for a long period where inflation-adjusted wages will be under acute pressure. That's a most unusual development in a period of high productivity growth," Stephen Roach, chief economist at Morgan Stanley, told the *New York Times* April 12. "The competitive pressures for companies to

Continued on Page 10

We're going bilingual in June!

A message to readers from the editors of the 'Militant' and 'Perspectiva Mundial'

The *Militant* is going bilingual! Beginning in June, the monthly Spanish-language news magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* will be combined with the weekly *Militant*, the editors of the two publications have announced.

"Every week a number of pages of the *Militant* will be in Spanish, with lead articles and editorials appearing in both languages," said *Militant* editor Argiris Malapanis in reporting the decision. "The new bilingual *Militant* will make it possible to reach out more broadly to working people, both English- and Spanish-speaking."

Combining *Perspectiva Mundial* with the weekly *Militant* will give readers more timely news and analysis in Spanish than was possible with a monthly magazine. It will also mean a small increase in the total

amount of Spanish-language coverage in any given month. The paper will go from 12 to 16 pages.

A substantial number of readers whose first language is Spanish also read English to varying degrees. Now, in addition to the *Perspectiva Mundial* section of the *Militant*, they will also have the benefit of the weekly coverage appearing in the English pages of the paper. This includes the *Militant's* regular on-the-scene reports on the union-organizing battle by coal miners in Utah. There will also be coverage on questions ranging from the U.S. rulers' moves to transform their armed forces in preparation for the imperialist wars of today and tomorrow, to how working people in Cuba are fighting to advance their socialist revolution, to first-

Continued on Page 10

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Coal miners discuss how to fight discrimination

Changing Woman Conference draws miners from five Western states



Militant/Teri Moss

Lisa Kennedy (at mike), a miner and member of International Union of Operating Engineers Local 953, and University of New Mexico Law School student Amber Creel moderated the April 18 Changing Woman Conference. Inset, conference participants.

BY DANIELLE LONDON
AND BETSY FARLEY

FARMINGTON, New Mexico—"There are 22 women out of 228 miners working underground at BHP. This conference is baby steps to something that can be bigger," said Lisa Kennedy, 36, an underground coal miner and member of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 953 at the BHP-owned San Juan mine near here. "It unites us back to the basics of brother and sisterhood, to discuss problems out." Kennedy was one of the moderators of the April 18 Changing Woman Conference.

Billed as a gathering to "teach, strength-

en, encourage and inform working women, particularly those working in non-traditional fields," the conference, which was sponsored by IUOE Local 953 and the University of New Mexico (UNM) School of Law, drew about 50 people. It was stamped by the large turnout of women who work in the region's coal mines and the struggles in the region to expand and strengthen the unionization of the mines.

IUOE Local 953 organizes miners at three surface mines and one underground mine located on the New Mexico side of the Four Corners area of the Navajo Nation. Ninety percent of the miners there are Navajo. The conference also drew miners from Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. Four miners from the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, participated in the conference and they were invited to speak during a lunchtime session about their more than 17-month battle for union representation.

"It was a success. Everybody walked away with more information," said Rosie Kellywood, a heavy equipment operator on the surface at BHP for 12 years. "We

Continued on Page 2

Anti-Tokyo protests in China continue as Japan presses militarization

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

Demonstrators mobilized for a second weekend in 10 cities across China April 16 and 17 to protest new history textbooks, approved by Japan's ministry of education, that whitewash the atrocities committed by the Japanese imperialism during its invasion and occupation of parts of China and Korea in the first half of the 20th century.

The largest action took place in Shanghai, where 20,000 people marched on the Japanese consulate, according to press reports. They threw rocks and bottles, attacked Japanese businesses, and smashed the windows of Japanese cars. There were also demonstrations in Nanning, Sheyang,

Continued on Page 3

Also Inside:

- Communist League candidates in United Kingdom defend a woman's right to choose 3
- Freedom Socialists win fight to withhold names of campaign supporters from Seattle gov't 3
- Mine bosses file reply to 'Militant' and SWP motion to dismiss harassment suit 4
- 40 years since Cuban mission to Congo: speech by Raúl Castro 7

Continued from front page
learned more about each other and that's just what we were hoping for." Kellywood was one of the miners who initiated the idea for the conference and was one of its main organizers. "This is just the beginning," she said. "The people want to do it again even stronger."

In the different workshops and in informal discussions, workers participating in the conference told stories about their experiences with discrimination and harassment on the job and the steps they took in many cases to join with co-workers and the union to defend their rights.

Participants described the fight to hold jobs and learn new skills in the face of harassment.

This miner described a weight-lifting test she was forced to undergo in order to be hired. In the process, she said, she was made to lift 110 lbs over her head. The mine bosses have long used such tests to discriminate against women and older workers and to reinforce unsafe conditions in the mines. Other miners also described their experiences with these tests.

“We are fighting for the future so women coming into the workforce don’t have to face what I faced,” said Rose Benally, who worked at BHP for 26 years and now works in plant operations. “I’ve always got help from the union. I feel I’ve got extra protection being union. Union brothers and sisters should support each other. The lead man was picking on me but they backed off because they see I won’t put up with it. Word will get around that I’ve been to this conference. They’ll think ‘she does mean business,’” she said. “It is important for men to be here too.”

Benally mentioned the importance of the 12-day strike that IUOE Local 953 carried out in February 2004. "We feel we're more secure having a union after last year's strike even though the problems we had were not totally resolved," he said. The union won a wage increase three times higher than the company's original offer and a raise in the allowance for Navajo traditional medicine.

Battle by Co-Op miners

Co-Op miner Berthila Leon, joined by co-workers, spoke to the April 18 women miners conference on the union-organizing struggle in Huntington, Utah.

"We thank you for inviting us," Leon told the crowd. "We are fighting for a union." Leon worked at the Co-Op mine for six years prior to the strike.

After winning their jobs back following a 10-month strike, Kennedy explained, “the company fired the workers again right before the union election. They claimed workers did not have proper work documents but it’s because we are fighting for the union. We say this is not an immigration question but a union question. Our votes were challenged by the company and sealed in a box. The NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] still has not counted the votes.

Many participants stopped by the Co-Op miners table to pick up information and make donations to the their fund. Several expressed interest in going with the miners to help in the effort to build solidarity with their fight.

This demand got an echo among miners at the conference. In a workshop on mental health, the speaker said that it is important for women's health to drink a lot of water. One woman, who works at one of the surface mines, said they don't drink water

BY TERI MOSS

Wars Peterman, president of International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 953 and an endorser of the fund, invited a representative to explain the case to those in attendance. Officials from the local made a donation to cover the cost of producing enough endorser cards for all 50 participants in the women miners conference and to receive a full packet of material on the case.

Giving a short presentation at a lunchtime gathering, Tamar Rosenfeld, a coal miner from Price, Utah, represented the Political Rights Defense Fund's Militant Fighting Fund. "The Co-Op miners have received extensive coverage in newspapers throughout the state as well as in the pages of the *Militant* each week," she explained. "Much of the content of the articles focused on what the miners were fighting for: better wages, safer working conditions, and to be treated with dignity.

“One aspect of the lawsuit filed by the C.W. Mining company and the company

union is a charge of defamation against the two main Utah dailies, the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret Morning News*, as well as the *Militant* newspaper,” she explained. “In their suit they allege that the paper’s sources—miners who labored under these conditions—are not trustworthy or reliable. They say quoting ‘a rabid labor union and its cohorts’ defamed the company and what the workers describe as the company union that operates at the mine.”

When Rosenfeld described the issues that were involved in a 1984 lawsuit by an FBI agent and the governor of South Dakota to prevent the distribution of the book *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, the mostly Navajo audience was quick to see the similarities in the two cases. Written by Peter Matthiessen, this book is an account of the FBI assault on American Indian Movement (AIM) activists at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in South

Continued on Page 4

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UK politicians press for abortion restrictions

Communist League candidates defend a woman’s right to choose

BY PAMELA HOLMES
EDINBURGH, Scotland—Politicians from two of the three main capitalist parties—Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democratic—have joined the call for a law reducing the time period in which a pregnant woman can choose to terminate her pregnancy. The Communist League candidates in the May 5 election for Parliament in the United Kingdom have joined the debate.

“A woman’s right to choose abortion is a class question, not a question of conscience. That is why the Communist League opposes any reduction in time limits and campaigns both during the election and after in defense of a woman’s right to choose,” Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Edinburgh East, said in a statement. The Communist League is also standing Celia Pugh as candidate in Bethnal Green and Bow, London.

“Many people have been attracted to our campaign tables by our signs highlighting this question,” said Clifford.

Following a statement by Conservative Party leader Michael Howard that he would support allocating parliamentary time to discuss reducing the time limit for most legal abortions from 24 weeks to 20 weeks, many politicians and church officials have fuelled the push towards more restrictions on abortion rights.

Although Prime Minister Anthony Blair has said that abortion should not be an election issue but a matter for “individual conscience,” his health minister, John Reid, used a Labour Party election news conference to announce his support

for a reduction in the time limit, having previously voted for a 16-week limit. Scotland’s First Minister, Jack McConnell, has encouraged the questioning of all candidates on their position on abortion and has called on all politicians to be prepared to reconsider their views. Charles Kennedy, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, has already voted for an attempt to reduce the time limit to 22 weeks.

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, Roman Catholic archbishop of Westminster, has called for abortion to become an election issue. The Anglican archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, claims that medical advances and the “rising number” of abortions have made this an important question.

Cardinal Keith Patrick O’Brien, president of the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland, has urged “Scotland’s voters to quiz their prospective candidates on this issue and demand that it is placed at the top of the political agenda.”

The 1967 Abortion Act is the law governing abortions in England, Scotland, and Wales. This law decriminalized abortion up to 28 weeks gestation under certain circumstances—stipulating that the procedure may be performed if the continuation of a pregnancy involves a greater risk to the physical or mental health of a woman, or her existing children, than having an abortion. In 2003, more than 180,000 women in England and Wales and over 12,000 women in Scotland had abortions.

The act does not apply in Northern Ireland. It is estimated that some 2,000



Militant/Jonathan Silberman
Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Edinburgh East in the Parliamentary elections in the United Kingdom, campaigns April 16 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

women travel from Northern Ireland to Britain each year to have abortions.

The 1967 act was amended by the 1990 Human Embryology and Human Fertilisation Act. The new law lowered the legal time limit for abortions from 28 weeks to 24 weeks, except where there is grave risk to the life the woman or her physical and mental well-being, or in cases of severe fetal abnormality.

Although so-called late abortions are

a main target of the current debate, less than 2 percent of abortions in 2003 were carried out between 20 and 24 weeks. Recently published figures show that only 25 abortions have been carried out past this period in Scotland since 1998.

“By concentrating on developments in the medical care of prematurely born babies and the emotive aspects of the very small number of late abortions, opponents of a woman’s right to choose abortion try to shift the focus away from women’s right to control their own bodies, to decide if and when to bear children,” Clifford said in his statement. “Under the banner of ‘viability of the foetus’ they are, objectively, trying to turn back the clock to when women’s role was to bear children and care for the family within the confines of the home. The gains of the 1967 Act, making abortion legal and safe, have been defended by mobilizing tens of thousands of people in the streets.

“Any attempt to limit women’s right to abortion must be opposed by all working people. Fighting for the trade unions to mobilize—as they did in 1979 when a demonstration supported by the Trades Union Congress drew 80,000 people—will not only strengthen the fight to defend women’s abortion rights,” the statement continued. “It will also help strengthen the unions themselves to defend the interests of all workers—male and female—as the bosses push to increase their profits by lengthening the working day, raising the retirement age and exploiting part-time and temporary workers.”

(For more information on the fight for abortion rights in the United Kingdom, see “‘Vera Drake’ shows why right to abortion is a powerful social gain” in the March 14 issue of the *Militant*.)

Anti-Tokyo protests continue in China

Continued from front page
and Shenzhan, and 4,000 gathered in Victoria Park in the center of Hong Kong.

Chinese government officials have refused Tokyo’s demand that they apologize for the protests and damage to Japanese businesses and diplomatic buildings. “The Chinese government has never done anything for which it has to apologize to the Japanese people,” Chinese foreign minister Li Zhaoxing said when he met with his Japanese counterpart April 17. “The problem now is that the Japanese government has done a series of things that have hurt the feelings of the Chinese people on the Taiwan issue, some international issues, and especially the treatment of history.”

The new textbooks describe the Nanjing Massacre of 1937, in which as many as 300,000 Chinese were killed, as an “incident,” and give barely a mention to the 200,000 mainly Chinese and Korean women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese occupying forces. The cover-up is a part of an ideological campaign on the part of the Japanese government to promote nationalism to justify Tokyo’s more aggressive

course in the region and worldwide.

Protesters have called for a boycott of Japanese goods. China is Japan’s biggest trading partner with exports and imports of \$206 billion a year, a fifth of Japan’s total. Japan is China’s third-largest trading partner after the European Union and the United States.

Japanese remilitarization

Japan and China are the two largest Asian military powers. Beijing’s military has been expanding rapidly in technological sophistication, an increasing worry to both Tokyo and Washington. U.S. and Japanese officials have noted with particular alarm the growth of the Chinese navy. Last year, Japanese officials said they had detected a Chinese submarine was detected for the first time in Japanese territorial waters, a sign of the growing extension of Beijing’s naval power.

“China has to strengthen its naval forces to guarantee the security of its access to shipped resources and should actively develop a large shipping fleet capable of operating in distant oceans,” wrote Men Honghua, a

professor of strategic studies at the Chinese Communist Party’s Central Party School, according to the April 7 *Financial Times*. Honghua noted that China’s dependency on imports of oil and raw materials means that it relies on a shipping “lifeline” that runs through the Taiwan Strait, South China Sea, Malacca Strait, and Indian Ocean all the way to the Arabian Sea.

For this reason, Hongua says, Beijing is seeking to transform its navy from a coastal defense force to a “blue water” navy capable of operating well beyond China’s territorial waters.

Both countries’ economies depend upon this lifeline for petroleum and other resources. Tokyo announced April 13 that Japanese companies would begin oil explorations in a section of the East China Sea that China claims as a part of its territorial waters. The Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation has already begun oil and gas exploration in the same waters.

Tokyo has a formidable military, one of the strongest in the world, but since its defeat at the hands of Washington in World

Continued on Page 10

Seattle: Freedom Socialists win disclosure fight

BY CECELIA MORIARITY
SEATTLE, Washington—After losing a lawsuit last year to the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP), the Seattle City Ethics and Election Commission (EEC) voted unanimously April 6 to grant Linda Averill, the FSP candidate for city council in this year’s election, exclusion from disclosure of the names of her campaign contributors.

The Seattle city election code requires candidates to disclose names, addresses, and employers of campaign donors. These reports are open to the public. As such, they are a convenient “enemies list” for government agencies, employers, private spies, and right-wing groups and individuals.

Averill explained in her request that the protection of the privacy rights of her campaign donors was still necessary as “public disclosure could expose them to threats, harassment or reprisals from private parties or the government.”

At the hearing, Averill’s attorneys presented examples of harassment against FSP members and supporters since the 2003 city elections, including threats made from a neo-Nazi website after a local radio station urged listeners to harass the FSP headquar-

ters. At the hearing the FSP also noted the September 2004 arson attack on the Socialist Workers Party campaign headquarters in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, as evidence to base its appeal for exemption.

In 2004 U.S. District Judge Robert Lasnik upheld the privacy rights of the FSP after the Seattle SEEC had denied Averill’s request for exclusion from disclosure in the city’s 2003 elections.

Lasnik ruled, “the Court finds that the compelled disclosure of the names, addresses, and/or employers of contributors for plaintiffs’ 2003 campaign would violate plaintiffs’ rights to freedom of speech and freedom of association.”

“I wholeheartedly support the exemption for the FSP,” said Chris Hoepfner, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Seattle. “The SWP has fought and won an exemption from the federal disclosure requirement from the Federal Election Commission for its presidential candidates through 2008.” Hoepfner added that the party’s fight for exemption is part of its decades-long support for the right of workers, farmers, and their organizations to engage in political activity, including

elections, free from government and right-wing harassment.

Despite the unanimous vote of the SEEC to uphold the non-disclosure rights of the FSP candidate in this year’s election for city council, several members of the commission expressed their sharp disagreement with Judge Lasnik’s ruling. The FSP must now go before the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission on April 26 to request an exemption as well.

2005 Socialist Workers Party election campaigns	
City/State	Candidate(s)
Atlanta	James Harris, Mayor
Boston	Margaret Trowe, Mayor Laura Garza, City Council
Cleveland	Romina Green, Mayor
Des Moines, IA	Edwin Fruit, City Council At Large
Detroit	Ilona Gersh, Mayor
Miami	Omari Musa, Mayor
New Jersey	Angela Lariscy, Governor Michael Ortega, State Assembly, 28th District
New York City	Martin Koppel, Mayor Arrin Hawkins, Manhattan Borough President Peter Musser, Bronx Borough President Dan Fein, City Comptroller
Pittsburgh	Brian Taylor, Mayor
Seattle	Chris Hoepfner, Mayor
St. Paul, MN	Jacob Perasso, Mayor Rebecca Williamson, City Council

Petitioning schedule for 2005 SWP campaigns		
City/State	Signatures required / Goal	Petitioning dates
Newark, NJ	800 / 1,500	May 7 - May 21
Pittsburgh	1,040 / 2,000	May 28 - June 30
Seattle	1,500 / 3,000	June 18 - July 5
New York City	7,500 / 15,000-20,000	July 12 - August 5

Socialist unionists discuss fight against mine bosses' lawsuit

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

ATLANTA—In the first of several regional forums to promote the Militant Fighting Fund, some 70 people participated in a meeting here April 16 entitled “Defend free speech and freedom of the press: Defend The *Militant* newspaper and Socialist Workers Party against Utah coal mine bosses’ lawsuit.”

The event, sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum, took place in conjunction with a national meeting over the April 16–17 weekend of socialist workers active in the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE-HERE).

Paul Mailhot, a coal miner from Price, Utah, who has recently left that job and is now organizing the Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF) and Militant Fighting Fund in Salt Lake City, spoke on the stakes involved in beating back the bosses’ suit and the opportunities for winning broad support for this fight within the labor movement and among supporters of civil liberties nationwide.

C.W. Mining, which manages the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, and the International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU), which miners describe as a company union, filed a sweeping lawsuit in September 2004 against the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and its international officers, 17 miners involved in a hard-fought campaign to organize the

UMWA at the mine, the major Utah dailies the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret Morning News*, the *Militant*, the SWP, Utah AFL-CIO, Jobs with Justice, and other defendants. Last December attorneys for the plaintiffs submitted to the court an amended complaint. About 24 pages of the 70-page complaint allege defamations by the *Militant* against C.W. Mining and the IAUWU. The suit names the SWP as a defendant on the basis of the false claim that the party “owns and controls” the socialist newsweekly. The most recent papers filed by the coal bosses claim those being sued were part of a conspiracy to defame the plaintiffs.

“The C.W. Mining lawsuit grows out of the most important labor battle that has taken place in this country in the past year and a half,” said Mailhot, “one which along with the coal boom, production profit push, and significant hiring of young workers into the mines has put the unionization of western coal mining on the agenda today.”

The Co-Op miners’ struggle began in September 2003 after the company tried to fire supporters of the UMWA working at the mine. C.W. Mining locked out 75 workers who protested these company actions, but was forced to rehire them 10 months later after a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)-brokered agreement between the company and the UMWA. The coal bosses later fired nearly all supporters of the union shortly before the union representation vote



Militant/Luis Astorga

The *Militant* backs the union-organizing drive by Co-Op miners, shown here with supporters picketing C.W. Mining’s loadout near Price, Utah, April 13.

in December.

“The Co-Op miners’ fight continues today, even though a majority of the miners who struck in September 2003 are now working in other mines,” said Mailhot. “Just a couple of days ago a number of Co-Op miners picketed at the C.W. Mining loadout facility where the bosses are holding mining classes to entice new workers to go work at Co-Op. Cars passing by honked and other miners joined the picket line.”

The bosses’ lawsuit needs to be taken as a “deadly serious threat,” emphasized Mailhot. “A suit like this is a tool the bosses will use—now and in the future—as workers fight for their rights, fight for unions. It is not primarily designed to win a judgment, where C.W. Mining will be richer in the end. It’s designed to shut people up, bring down papers like the *Militant* that report on and editorially campaign on the side of workers, and discourage workers from joining union-organizing drives or using union power.”

It’s important to recognize that since be-

ing filed, this suit has “put a chill on the miners being able to get their side of the story out into the public,” Mailhot pointed out. “A recent rally of 100 people at the UMWA hall—a big event in the Price area—received not a single line of copy in the local papers. The *Militant* remains the only newspaper that continues to regularly report on this important struggle, he said.

From the time this suit was filed the *Militant* has succeeded in working with the two Salt Lake City dailies to argue the constitutional points of this case,” said Mailhot. It’s significant that oral arguments on behalf of all these papers will be presented together before the judge, he added.

Neutral reporting privilege

One of the important arguments against the bosses’ charge of defamation is the issue of “neutral reporting privilege.” This is a privilege recognized by some federal courts that says as long as a reporter neutrally reports what someone says in a controversy, in an accurate and disinterested manner, even if the statement is false, the reporting is afforded some protection from charges of libel.

The *Militant* in its brief argued that it has the right to report on one side of a controversy. “This is important because the *Militant* doesn’t pretend to tell the mine bosses’ side of the story. Its masthead says, ‘A socialist newsweekly published in the interests of working people’ and it sticks to that,” stated Mailhot.

“The newspapers’ position in this case is that you also don’t have to be the *New York Times* or a government official for the media to quote you. A coal miner in Huntington,

Continued on Page 5

Bosses reply to ‘Militant’ motion to dismiss suit

BY NORTON SANDLER

Attorneys for C.W. Mining, operators of the Co-Op Mine in Huntington, Utah, and the International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU) on April 15 filed their response to the *Militant* and Socialist Workers Party’s motion that a lawsuit against them be dismissed. The suit was filed in September 2004, and amended in December, against several defendants including the United Mine Workers of America and their international officers, 17 workers at the mine, the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the Salt Lake *Deseret Morning News*, and others including the *Militant* and the SWP. This filing by the coal bosses’ attorneys was their last written answer to the court before a federal district judge schedules oral arguments on all of the motions to dismiss the case.

C.W. Mining, which has been locked in a year-and-a-half-long battle against miners at the Co-Op mine who have been fighting for union representation, better pay, safety, and dignity, is urging Utah Federal District Judge Dee Benson to disregard the arguments of the *Militant* and the other defendants and allow the lawsuit to go forward. “The Court should bear in mind that Plaintiffs have not had the opportunity to even begin discovery,” says this recent C.W. Mining and IAUWU memorandum to the court. “What *The Militant* did by way of investigation [of the dispute at the Co-Op Mine] is a fact in its exclusive control, for which Plaintiffs are entitled to conduct discovery.” By addressing this point to the court, C.W. Mining’s attorneys hope to prepare the way for invasive questioning and financially draining interrogatories into the affairs of the *Militant*, and the Socialist Workers Party, which they falsely accuse of “owning and controlling the paper.”

The coal bosses’ lawyers in this round of arguments accuse the *Militant* of not republishing what the miners have had to say in their fight against the company, but rather the publication of “their own false affirmative statements of fact separate and apart from anything others have said.” This is also one of their arguments in urging the judge not grant a motion to dismiss to the two Salt Lake City dailies being sued in this case. Because of this type of reporting, C.W. Mining and IAUWU attorneys contend, none of the newspapers in this case merit the protections against libel suits afforded to publications reporting on events and issues of “public interest.”

In order to prove that the articles printed by the *Militant* defamed the owners of the Co-Op mine, C.W. Mining’s attorneys cite the “plethora of comments publicly made by others, after reading *The Militant*’s statements or substantially the same statements made by others, showing that Plaintiffs’ reputations have been damaged in the eyes of those others.” In this way, supposedly the bishop of the Salt Lake City Catholic Diocese and Father Donald Hope, a local Catholic priest in Price, Utah, were led down the path of defamation against

the mine owners.

C.W. Mining also continues to paint all defendants in the case as being guilty of a vast civil conspiracy to defame and thereby damage the mine owners.

Attorneys for the *Militant* will be submitting further arguments to the court asking that this harassment lawsuit be dismissed. Future articles in the *Militant* will report on these final papers to be filed before the judge begins oral arguments on whether the case should be dismissed or move on in the court system toward a trial.

Miners discuss fight against discrimination

Continued from Page 2

at work because there are no toilet facilities or even portable outhouses nearby.

The conference included workshops on how to file a discrimination claim with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; mental health in employment; sexual harassment, and other topics. Speakers included Dr. Eulynda Toledo-Benalli; Earl Mettler, a lawyer from Shiprock, Arizona, the Navajo Nation’s capital, who has represented uranium miners and people in the Navajo nation; Glo-Jean Todacheene, the Navajo Nation’s Shiprock Chapter vice-president; and others.

Professor Margaret Montoya, a member of the UNM law school faculty, led a workshop on discrimination in the workplace. Montoya, whose father was a copper miner, said that it is harder today to fight against discrimination in the workplace through the courts. She said you can file a lawsuit, but it can take years for a court to hear the case and this is after you have already spent a lot of money on lawyers and other legal expenses. She said that is why conferences like these are so important, so women can discuss how to fight this discrimination on the job and how the union can help.

Several UNM law students toured one of the BHP mines prior to the conference and participated in the gathering.

‘This is a beginning’

“I could have brought other women to the meeting if I was aware of what kind of meeting it was going to be,” said Rose Bell, a member of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1332 who works as a heavy equipment operator at the McKinley surface mine near Gallup,

New Mexico. “One of my co-workers is going through some issues at work and she is scared now. This would have been a boost for her and she could have learned about the tools she can use. What the other ladies talked about in the workshops would have helped her. I was active in the Coal Employment Project [CEP] and went to many of the conferences.”

The CEP, an organization of women coal miners most of whom were members of the UMWA, was founded in 1977 to fight for women to get and hold jobs in the mines.

The CEP held annual conferences from 1979 until its dissolution in 1999. The group waged legal fights to break down the systematic discrimination practiced by

the coal bosses. Through conferences and other gatherings and networks, the CEP also worked to help women confront the day-to-day challenges they faced in fighting to hold onto their jobs.

“What we went through is still going on,” Bell said. “I am interested in working on the next conference. I will be giving a report to my local meeting on what happened at the conference.”

Peterman wrapped up the conference saying, “I would like to see this as a beginning and would like to see it continue. I would like to see a board to plan a conference for next year. We have started something that should continue. I declare this conference just started.”

Militant Fighting Fund gains support

Continued from Page 2

Dakota in 1975.

“The author and publisher were sued for defamation based on the premise that AIM activists and their supporters were not good sources, and that the author was one-sided and therefore supposedly defamatory,” said Rosenfeld. When she explained that the FBI agent and governor eventually lost the suit, and what an important victory this was, one of the women miners broke out in spontaneous applause. “But it took seven years—during which time no one could buy the book—and it cost the publisher some \$3 million in legal fees. Civil suits like these are designed to inflict just this type of damage on those they are filed against,” Rosenfeld concluded.

Those who signed on in support of the Militant Fighting Fund included several coal miners who are members of IUOE

Local 953 in Farmington; Professor Margaret Montoya from the University of New Mexico School of Law in Albuquerque; and Eulynda Toledo-Benalli, a director at the Crownpoint Institute of Technology, a tribal technical college on the Navajo Nation. Donations to the Political Rights Defense Fund’s Militant Fighting Fund from participants totaled \$125.

Amber Creel, a student at the UNM School of Law, volunteered to help the Militant Fighting Fund organize a public meeting on her campus. “I can think of several groups we could contact who would be excited about sponsoring something like this,” she said.

To endorse the case or make a contribution, send your name, address, phone number, and e-mail to Political Rights Defense Fund, Box 761 Church Street Station, New York, NY 10007.

‘Militant’ subscription drive on pace in week two



Militant/Dan Fein

Arrin Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Manhattan borough president, campaigns at State University in Binghamton, New York April 12. Argiris Malapanis, editor of the *Militant* spoke to around 40 students that evening on “Why students should oppose U.S. intervention in Venezuela and Latin America.”

In 3 weeks, 1,000-plus copies sold of ‘New International’ nos. 12 and 13

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

Socialists equipped with the two newest issues of *New International* have just finished the third week of a five-month drive to sell and study these Marxist theoretical magazines. Total sales of the magazines, which feature the articles “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun” and “Our Politics Start with the World,” have topped a thousand since their release on March 26.

In Los Angeles, socialists are contacting longtime readers of the *Militant* to introduce them to the *New Internationals*. “We sent out a letter to *Militant* subscribers and got 15 requests for the new issues by mail and phone,” Frank Forrestal reported. Argiris Malapanis, editor of the *Militant*, spoke at a Militant Labor Forum there April 19, using “Their Transformation and Ours,” which appears in *NI* no. 12, in his explanation of Washington’s moves in Latin America and its threats against Venezuela today. Ten copies of the new issues of *New International* and their Spanish edition, *Nueva Internacional*, were sold at the meeting.

In New York, campaigners are maximizing the month left at many city and state campuses to get out with the new magazines. Martin Koppel, Socialist Workers

candidate for mayor of New York, led a team to State University’s Stony Brook campus in Long Island where he spoke to about 30 students April 19, on “Why students should oppose U.S. intervention in Venezuela and Latin America.” Several books and pamphlets were sold, including a copy of *New International* no. 12.

“Someone came into the campaign center looking for tapes on Malcolm X,” said Dennis Richter from San Francisco. “He stayed and talked for a couple of hours and ended up picking up the two *New Internationals*.” An electrician who stopped at a literature table during the hotel workers strike in San Francisco came by as well looking for *Capitalism’s World Disorder* by Jack Barnes. He ended up buying both *New Internationals* along with a subscription to the *Militant*.

Campaigners in a number of cities are discussing plans to raise their local quotas for the drive, as more than 40 percent of local targets has already been hit. An international goal for the five-month campaign will be decided after the quotas are reviewed.



‘Militant’ Subscription Drive April 2–May 22 Week 2 of 7			
Country	Goal	Sold	%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	20	15	75%
Christchurch	15	6	40%
N.Z. total	35	21	60%
SWEDEN	16	7	44%
CANADA	60	20	33%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	40	14	35%
Edinburgh	20	6	30%
UK total	60	20	33%
AUSTRALIA	30	9	30%
UNITED STATES			
Craig, CO	20	9	45%
Newark	70	29	41%
Omaha	25	10	40%
Washington	55	21	38%
Chicago	65	24	37%
Tampa	30	11	37%
Des Moines	50	18	36%
Twin Cities	70	25	36%
Boston	60	21	35%
NE Pennsylvania	40	13	33%
Houston	50	16	32%
Detroit	28	8	29%
New York	115	32	28%
Los Angeles	90	25	28%
Atlanta	40	11	28%
Price, UT	50	13	26%
San Francisco	25	6	24%
Pittsburgh	50	11	22%
Philadelphia	50	9	18%
Cleveland	35	6	17%
Seattle	35	5	14%
Miami	65	9	14%
Birmingham	25	2	8%
U.S. total	1143	334	29%
ICELAND	17	2	12%
Int’l totals	1361	413	30%
Goal/Should be	1350	386	29%

Country	Goal	Sold	%
CANADA			
NEW ZEALAND	60	52	87%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	30	30	100%
Christchurch	20	8	40%
N.Z. total	50	38	76%
UNITED STATES			
NE Pennsylvania	40	25	63%
Cleveland	30	18	60%
Pittsburgh	80	45	56%
Washington	80	42	53%
Houston	80	42	53%
Miami	60	30	50%
Atlanta	100	48	48%
Seattle	60	28	47%
New York	250	110	44%
Los Angeles	200	83	42%
Philadelphia	75	31	41%
Price, UT	50	19	38%
Chicago	100	38	38%
Detroit	60	21	35%
Tampa	55	19	35%
Boston	120	37	31%
Omaha	32	9	28%
Newark	125	34	27%
San Francisco	175	46	26%
Craig, CO	40	10	25%
Des Moines	80	17	21%
Twin Cities	105	21	20%
Birmingham	50	6	12%
Other		72	
U.S. total	2047	851	42%
AUSTRALIA	50	19	38%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	35	14	40%
London	120	39	33%
UK total	155	53	34%
SWEDEN	40	7	18%
ICELAND	32	5	16%
Int’l totals	2434	1025	42%

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

Riding the momentum of a big first week, the international campaign to win new subscribers to the *Militant* ended its second week on pace to make the 1,350-subscription goal. Partisans of the socialist weekly added 122 subscriptions to the chart in week two. When combined with the first week’s sales of close to 300 the drive remains on course. Week Two’s sales, however, fell short of the weekly average of 192 subscriptions needed to make the goal.

In San Francisco, socialists joined a rally of 500 at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where a one-day work stoppage of campus workers took place. They sold 20 single copies and a subscription.

Seth Dellinger from Los Angeles writes, “Supporters of the *Militant* were invited to set up a table at a concert organized at the South Central Farmers’ gardens and sold a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* along with a copy of *Nueva Internacional* no. 7. Garden farmers are fighting the city government’s attempts to displace them from their small plots in Vernon, an industrial center east of L.A. We also sold four subscriptions to young people planning to attend the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students.”

Dan Fein and Peter Musser, Socialist Workers candidates for New York city comptroller and Bronx borough president, respectively, joined an anti-police brutality rally at New York’s city hall April 18 against the release of New York City cop Francis Livoti from a North Carolina federal prison. Livoti served seven years for the 1994 killing of 29-year-old Anthony Baez, who he strangled to death using a chokehold. “I used to subscribe to the *Militant* years ago,” said a woman when she saw the paper. When she filled out the sub blank she checked the renewal box and said, “I am glad you are here.”

Socialists organize meetings to raise funds toward the \$90,000 Militant Fund

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Partisans of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in several cities are planning public meetings to raise funds toward the \$90,000 international effort to finance the two socialist publications, which are soon to be combined into a single bilingual weekly format (see front page). The seven-week drive ends May 22.

With less than five weeks remaining in the campaign, these meetings will be a critical part of the success of the effort.

Militant staff member Arrin Hawkins will speak in Boston on May 7 on the topic, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. Hawkins was part of an international reporting team that provided coverage for the *Militant* during this year’s Havana International Book Fair.

Ron Smith, a Young Socialist in Pittsburgh, will speak in Cleveland May 1 on the topic *There Is No Peace! 60 Years Since the End of World II*. Brian Taylor, a coal miner and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh, will speak in Houston on May 7.

Argiris Malapanis, editor of the *Militant*, spoke to about 45 people at the Militant Labor Forum in Los Angeles April 16. Organizers of the meeting made a pitch for the fund that netted \$850. For some it was their first chance to make a pledge to the fund and at least two others who already have pledges decided to increase them.

As this issue goes to press, the fund continues to fall behind with \$14,438 having been received in contributions. That’s almost \$20,000 off the mark in the third week of the effort.

Supporters of the *Militant* are encouraged to send in accounts of their progress each week that can be included in this column. Checks and money orders should be made out to the *Militant*, ear-

On April 20, Fein sold a subscription to a bus driver and member of TWU Local 100 at a strike settlement meeting between the union and the Bee-Line bus company in Westchester County. The bus drivers were ending a 48-day strike against the company around the demand for early retirement without a reduction in benefits. “He saw the articles the *Militant* had written about their strike,” Fein said, “but he got the subscription because of the coverage of world politics.”

Atlanta meeting

Continued from Page 4

Utah, is a legitimate news source.”

April 15 was the deadline for the coal bosses legal response to the brief by the *Militant* and SWP requesting that the case be dismissed. Attorneys for the party and the *Militant* will then have seven days to reply to C.W. Mining’s arguments. Finally the judge will hear oral arguments before making a decision of what to do with the case, Mailhot explained.

“It’s absolutely necessary to explain the issues in this fight,” said Mailhot. “This case is at the center of the labor movement and the fight for free speech and freedom of the press, so the potential to reach out broadly is enormous.”

Towards this end PRDF has launched a campaign to win endorsers for the Militant Fighting Fund, and to raise tens of thousands of dollars needed to cover legal and publicity expenses. The \$40,000 raised earlier by the Militant Fighting Fund has largely been spent. At least another \$50,000 is needed to cover costs over the next few months, Mailhot pointed out.

The collection of \$1,655 at the meeting reflected the seriousness of the participants to beat back the C.W. Mining lawsuit.

\$90,000 Militant Fund March 26–May 22: Week 3 of 8			
	Goal	Paid	%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	1,750	855	49%
Christchurch	800	26	3%
CANADA	1,230	500	41%
AUSTRALIA	750	180	24%
ICELAND	200	20	10%
SWEDEN	800	40	5%
FRANCE	300	0	0%
UNITED KINGDOM	700	0	0%
UNITED STATES			
Detroit	2,500	950	38%
NE Pennsylvania	1,500	500	33%
Des Moines	1,100	325	30%
Other	700	200	29%
Craig, CO	1,800	500	28%
New York	11,000	2,886	26%
Los Angeles	9,000	2,280	25%
Philadelphia	3,000	700	23%
Washington	3,000	570	19%
Omaha	355	60	17%
Price, UT	4,000	600	15%
Seattle	6,000	900	15%
Birmingham	1,300	175	13%
Newark	3,750	390	10%
Boston	3,300	335	10%
Houston	3,500	340	10%
Chicago	4,000	340	9%
San Francisco	9,500	500	5%
Pittsburgh	2,500	100	4%
Miami	1,400	50	4%
Twin Cities	4,800	111	2%
Atlanta	4,300	5	0%
Cleveland	1,000	0	0%
Tampa	1,500	0	0%
Int’l totals	91,335	14,438	16%
Should be	90,000	33,750	38%
Raised goal *			

Bolshevism versus class collaboration

A reply to Young Communist League's defense of Stalinist Popular Frontism

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Working people are being subjected to a growing flood of articles in the big-business media and statements by capitalist politicians around the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. U.S. president George Bush's upcoming tour of Europe to celebrate "Victory in Europe Day" is the occasion for an orgy of American nationalist propaganda. May 8, 1945—the so-called V-E Day—is when U.S. imperialism and its allies formally declared their defeat of German imperialism.

As part of the debate around these events, some organizations in the workers movement have defended what was known as the Popular Front. This is the political course that was pursued, beginning in the mid-1930s, by the Soviet government and the parties worldwide that looked to it for political direction. In the name of "defeating fascism," they promoted programmatic or governmental alliances of workers parties with liberal bourgeois parties. Popular Front governments that included Socialist and Communist Parties were elected in France and Spain in 1936. During World War II, the Communist Parties around the world continued this line by supporting Washington and other "Allied" powers in their war with the "Axis" governments.

One of the advocates of this perspective today is the Communist Party USA. Over the last year the press of the CPUSA and its youth group, the Young Communist League (YCL), has published articles about the Popular Front.

Two representative items in *Dynamic*, the YCL's newspaper, are an article in the October 27 issue by Joel Lewis titled "Against Fascism and War by Georgi Dimitrov" and a piece by Matt Murtagh called "The 2004 Elections and the United Front Strategy" in the Jan. 11, 2004, issue.

The articles seek to rationalize the stance of the CPUSA in the 2004 presidential elections, in which it campaigned for Sen. John Kerry, the Democratic candidate, under the slogan "defeat Bush and the ultraright." This is not a new position. For several decades the Communist Party has called on working people to support one of the twin parties of the U.S. capitalist ruling class, the Democrats, by arguing that the other major capitalist party, the Republicans, represents the "extreme right."

Lewis writes that the rise of Adolf Hitler's National Socialist movement to power in Germany in 1933 "contains eerie parallels with the world in which we live today," suggesting a similarity between the Nazi-led regime and the Bush White House. He says the Popular Front strategy was based on lessons from the failures of "the German communists, who had focused their energies attacking reformists on the left instead of organizing a United Front against the Nazi Party." He adds that "this dangerous mistake is being repeated today by those who propose equal condemnation for the Democrats and Republicans."



Mobilization of workers in Petrograd, 1917. In October 1917, the Bolshevik Party led Russian workers and peasants to power. They opposed the Mensheviks' course of joining provisional government in a coalition with liberal capitalists. The Communist International in Lenin's time continued this revolutionary working-class course, rejecting the "crossing of class barriers" advocated later by Stalin and today by the Communist Party USA.

Today, with the incumbent president re-elected, the CPUSA's line remains "Defeat the Bush agenda." This means supporting Democratic Party candidates in the coming city, state, and national elections.

We'll come back later to the U.S. elections and the political situation today. But the *Dynamic* articles on the Popular Front, which refer to lessons from the momentous events of Germany, Spain, France, and United States in the 1930s and '40s, pose fundamental political questions that must be addressed.

These are not "historical" questions for scholars. They stand as necessary lessons for working people and youth today who are repelled by the brutal realities of capitalism and want to understand the world in order to change it. They were crucial to the outcome of the class struggle at every turning point in the 20th century, and they remain decisive today.

The main conclusion of revolutionists is that it is possible to end the exploitation of working people, imperialist war, national oppression, women's second-class status, and other degrading social relations. The only force with the capacity to lead such a transformation is the working class, which must organize independently of all pro-capitalist parties. A revolutionary workers party is needed to lead a movement—both here and internationally—along a strategy for workers and farmers to take state power into their own hands through a social revolution, overturn capitalist rule, and join the worldwide struggle for socialism. The political activity of such a party, from union struggles to election campaigns, must be part of pointing to-

ward the road to power.

What happened from the 1920s on, however, is very different from what is presented by the CPUSA and YCL.

What was the Popular Front?

"While Hitler was eventually able to consolidate his power in Germany," writes Lewis, "his path toward war was slowed and his ultimate destruction ensured by the theoretical and strategic positions laid out by the Bulgarian Georgi Dimitrov and adopted by the Comintern and the Young Communist International in 1935. In his book, *The United Front: The Struggle Against Fascism and War*, Dimitrov laid the groundwork that transformed the worldwide communist movement into a mass movement against the racist and militarist threats of the ultra-right."

That strategy was the Popular Front, which, Lewis says:

can be summed up in one simple word:

Unity! The original United Front program of the Communist International referred to a political and industrial unity of the working class. Dimitrov's concept of the Popular Front was a series of political alliances of all progressive forces with a common agenda of defeating the ultra-right. The Popular Front worked as a program that communists could follow in one country to further the struggle against fascism and war. But the Popular Front was also a larger international series of alliances that eventually manifested itself in the Grand Alliance between the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union—an alliance which led to the ultimate destruction of Hitler's Reich.

He adds:

Dimitrov also warned of the danger of divisions in the alliance of progressive forces—divisions bred by the "ultra-left." The ultra-left, most notably the Trotskyites, condemned any type of populist unity that crosses class barriers or which did not propose the immediate advancement of socialist revolution.

In reality, the Popular Front was a foreign policy course that the Communist International (Comintern) followed to serve the needs of a privileged bureaucracy in Moscow at the expense of the interests of working people—at a time of revolutions and working-class upsurges in many countries in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

The regime in Moscow headed by Joseph Stalin instructed Communist Parties around the world to carry out this line of forming a coalition of capitalist and workers parties. As Murtagh puts it, they pursued "an alliance of all antifascist forces, across class and even political divides, in order to first weather fascism and ultimately destroy it."

This meant, in the name of "unity," subor-

dinating the interests of workers and farmers to the class needs of the "democratic" wing of the capitalist class.

Today defenders of the Popular Front strategy say it was a success because "Hitler was defeated."

The opposite is true. The Popular Front was a counterrevolutionary political course that led to the defeat of revolutionary upsurges in Spain and France. When workers and farmers challenged capitalist prerogatives, the Communist Parties in those countries led the effort to demobilize and block them, resorting to thuggery and even assassinations against others in the workers movement. These defeats of revolutionary openings made World War II possible.

Far from being a strategy to defeat fascism, the Popular Front line made its victory possible in Spain. Rather than eliminate the danger of fascism, it helped stabilize capitalist rule—the source of fascism—in many countries.

A break with the Bolsheviks

The Popular Front, as presented by Dimitrov and applied by Communist Parties around the world in the 1930s and '40s, had no continuity with the Bolshevik Party, which led working people to take power in the October 1917 Russian Revolution. In fact, it represented a sharp break with the course of the Bolsheviks and the first five years of the Communist International under the leadership of V.I. Lenin.

Murtagh attributes the origin of the Popular Front to Antonio Gramsci, a leader of the Italian Communist Party in the 1920s. This is a case of false paternity. Whatever the limitations of Gramsci's politics, he was a genuine revolutionary.

The Popular Front policy was imposed on the Communist International by its bureaucratized leadership, headed by Joseph Stalin, which broke with the working-class course of the Bolsheviks.

From 1928 to 1934 the Stalinist movement had followed ultraleft policies. In those years, dubbed the "third period," the Comintern leadership had declared that revolution was imminent everywhere, forbidding united-front actions with other workers parties such as the Social Democrats, which were falsely branded "social fascists."

A reversal of that policy began to take public shape in the spring of 1935, when Stalin signed a pact with imperialist France and announced that he "understands and fully approves" the rearmament by Paris, which was then beginning its preparations for war. In 1935 the French Communist Party initiated a Popular Front coalition with the Socialist Party and a liberal party, the Radicals. That course was then instituted as policy for all other countries at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, held in Moscow in July-August 1935. Dimitrov, a leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party, was assigned to present the report on this new line at the congress.

Now Communist Parties everywhere were ordered to collaborate not only with the working-class parties (except the "Trotskyists") previously called social fascists but with capitalist parties they had until then opposed, which they now deemed "progressive" and "democratic." On the international scene, Stalinist parties were instructed to support the "democratic" imperialist governments in their military and diplomatic preparations for war against fascist-led imperialist regimes.

This course of class collaboration—"crossing class barriers," as Lewis accurately calls it—was a break with the course that the Bolshevik Party had taken in the Russian Revolution and the first years of the Comintern.

Early Comintern on the united front

In the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Bolshevik Party led workers and peasants to power. During the revolutionary upsurge the Mensheviks, a class-collaborationist party, argued that workers should subordinate themselves to the liberal capitalists in order to bring down the brutal tsarist regime; the goal of working-class power

Continued on Page 11

FOR FURTHER READING

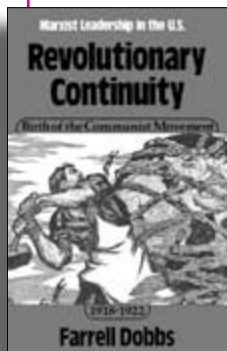
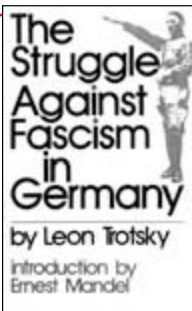
The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany

by Leon Trotsky

Writing in the heat of struggle against the rising Nazi movement, a central leader of the Russian Revolution examines the class roots of fascism and advances a revolutionary strategy to combat it. \$32.00

Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It

by Leon Trotsky \$6.00



Revolutionary Continuity: Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918-1922

by Farrell Dobbs

The second of two volumes, this book traces the emergence of a communist movement in the United States during its first five years, and its political interconnection with the efforts by Lenin and the Russian Communist Party to replace the now politically bankrupt Second International with a new international leadership of the working class. \$19.00

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40 years since Cuba’s mission in Congo

Raúl Castro: Congo was heroic chapter in Cuban/African struggle against imperialism

The following speech was given by Raúl Castro, minister of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, at a meeting commemorating the 20th anniversary of two Cuban internationalist contingents to the Congo. It was held in Havana, Nov. 7, 1985. We are publishing it on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Cuban mission to the Congo.

One of the two contingents was led by Ernesto Che Guevara in the Republic of the Congo, with its capital city in Leopoldville, later named Kinshasa. That mission is detailed in Guevara’s Episodes of the Revolutionary War: Congo and in From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution, consisting of an interview with Víctor Dreke, the column’s second-in-command. The other contingent was led by Jorge Risquet and Rolando Kindelán, based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with its capital in Brazzaville.

“The experience we gained,” says Dreke in From the Escambray to the Congo, “made it possible for us to do what we did to aid the liberation struggles in Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and other places.”

The 13-year Angolan operation, in which more than 300,000 Cuban volunteers participated in helping to defeat several South African invasions of that country, culminated in the decisive defeat of the apartheid army in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988. That defeat not only drove the apartheid army out of Angola, but played a major role in forcing the apartheid regime to grant independence to Namibia and opened the door to the final defeat of apartheid itself inside South Africa.

As Nelson Mandela stated in 1991, “The defeat of the apartheid army was an inspiration to the struggling people inside South Africa! Without the defeat of Cuito Cuanavale our organizations would not have been unbanned!... Cuito Cuanavale has been a turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid!”

Translation and subheads are by the Militant.

BY RAÚL CASTRO

As we come to the 20th anniversary of the formation of the columns of Cuban internationalist fighters that carried out missions in the Congo-Leopoldville and Congo-Brazzaville—known today as the Republic of Zaire and the People’s Republic of the Congo respectively—it is my honor, on behalf of the party leadership, the Council of State, and Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, to award the Ernesto Che Guevara Order and the Internationalist Combatant Medal to the members of those detachments. These compañeros had the historical privilege of being the precursors of the joint struggle of the people of Cuba and the peoples of Black Africa against colonial and neocolonial oppression, for national independence, and for the triumph and consolidation of socialism.

Sending these contingents was an expression of the great strategic importance our party and commander in chief have placed ever since in the African revolutionary movements’ struggle against imperialism and of our identification with their just cause.

The historical dimension of that expression of solidarity by our people is greatly enlarged by the fact that one of those columns was commanded by the individual who has become a universal symbol of the purest and most legitimate sentiments of internationalism: the Heroic Guerrilla, Ernesto Che Guevara.

During an extensive tour of many African countries and through direct contact with the most outstanding progressive and revolutionary figures on the continent, Che observed with his exceptional grasp the ferment of emancipation brewing in most of

the newly independent countries and even more so in those countries still under the colonial boot.

Che conceived the idea of supporting this revolutionary upsurge on the African continent. For this endeavor he chose Zaire, an enormous and rich country whose people had broken the chains of Belgian colonialism but which, under the leadership of Lumumba, would not be quietly neocolonized. The former colonialists and their NATO partners decided to assassinate the famous patriot by using puppets of the ilk of Tshombe, Mobutu, and Kasavubu, as well as white mercenaries. The Lumumbist patriots took the road of armed resistance, but they lacked experience, unity, and a developed consciousness. Che thought they needed the help they were requesting, to be supplied by a handful of seasoned Cuban revolutionary combatants.

Also in early 1965 Che met in Brazzaville with the leadership of the MPLA [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola], headed by Agostinho Neto. Out of that historic meeting came another commitment requested by the Angolan patriots: to help that guerrilla movement in its fight against Portuguese colonialism.

The leadership of our party approved both expressions of solidarity to the brother peoples of Angola and Zaire.

But that historic decision by Che to depart for other parts of the world that were calling for his valuable efforts of assistance would nevertheless have a deeper motive rooted in time and distance, involving the destinies of the African continent and our America.

The colonial plunder of Africa

The colonial plunder of Africa had begun even before the first Europeans arrived in the Americas. Long before the native inhabitants of the Antilles were exterminated by the fire and lash of the conquistadors, Portuguese and Spaniards had already introduced the notorious slave trade, appropriating not only marble, rubber, and other natural resources, but above all the richest resource of all, the African himself.

In barely three centuries, more than 50 million Africans were uprooted from their lands to be sent to the Americas, reduced to the status of slaves, with many dying in the capture or passage. More than five centuries of plunder by the European powers, joined by the United States this past century, have witnessed the building of opulent capitalist societies, developed and erected largely on the suffering, poverty, hunger, and death of the peoples of Africa.

What could be more eloquent, as an illustration of the colonizers’ absolute scorn for the personality and future of these peoples, than the repugnant Berlin Conference of 1885, exactly one century ago this year, where representatives of the leading capitalist powers, with a sharp sense of geometry but without the slightest respect for human dignity and rights, distributed the entire continent among themselves, dividing up as they pleased nations, peoples, ethnic groups, and families.

This process of colonization and plunder, which bled the African continent dry and snatched away millions of its sons and daughters, was not without a fierce, tenacious, and heroic resistance that laid the basis for the rich patriotic and combative traditions of the African peoples. These traditions enriched our own history of struggle when those very men whose ancestors had been uprooted from their lands took up machetes, joined the mambí army to fight for Cuba’s freedom, and helped forge the Cuban nation.*

Toward the middle of this century, the exploitation of the African continent came under a new guise. The end of World War I signified the transfer of African colonial possessions from the vanquished to the victors, like luscious spoils of war.

Following the Second World War,



Tricontinental

Cuban fighters in the Congo, 1965. Left to right: Roberto Chaveco, Rogelio Oliva, José María Martínez Tamayo, and Ernesto Che Guevara.

however, the situation became qualitatively different: the emergence of the socialist community as a result of the glorious Red Army’s decisive victory over German fascism, as well as the collapse of Japanese militarism, created an international relationship of forces favorable to struggles for national independence and social progress. This situation was expressed historically by the triumph of the revolutions in China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and Algeria, and was manifested in the breakup of the colonial system, with the vast majority of countries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean obtaining formal independence.

Context of ferment in Africa

It was precisely in this context of political ferment and the African peoples’ active projection onto the world stage that Che Guevara saw the need to lend his solidarity

The Cuban internationalists in Congo were “the precursors of the joint struggle of the people of Cuba and peoples of Black Africa against colonial and neocolonial oppression, for national independence, and for the triumph and consolidation of socialism.”

to prevent Zaire’s recolonization and contribute to the armed struggle of the peoples of the Portuguese colonies. For him this was a starting point for the great final battle: the liberation of the South African people from the ignominious boot of apartheid and the independence of Namibia, occupied by the white racists of Pretoria.

Each of us still remembers the emotion of those defining moments of our internationalist calling, when a battle-tested contingent of Cuban combatants was first preparing to leave for Black Africa to fulfill not only a duty of solidarity but a historical imperative of gratitude toward one of the continents from which our ancestors came. Just as three decades earlier Cubans fought

for the freedom of Spain, also a cradle of our forefathers.

That conviction prevailed throughout the arduous training period. Not only did this training provide each of you with the military training necessary to carry out fully such an honorable assignment. It also forged a deep sense of brotherhood and collectivity, which was deepened in the difficult subsistence conditions of the mission and in the rigors of battle, and was further developed through all these years of dedication to the tasks of building socialism.

Faithful to the confidence placed in them by the party and by Fidel, in the course of a mere few months both columns waged, in their respective areas, intense combat actions characterized by the commitment and discipline of their members.

The column that went to the Congo under the name Patrice Lumumba Battalion had a number of missions. It was, first of all, a reserve force for Che’s column, and was to join them if necessary and at the appropriate time.

It also had the task of helping the progressive government of the Congo, threatened with attack by the regime in Leopoldville (now Kinshasa). For this task the battalion was not only ready to fight alongside the Congolese army against a foreign attack from the other side of the Congo River, but its assignment included forming several militia battalions.

No less important was the mission of participating with a group of Angolan adviser-combatants in the MPLA’s Second Front in Cabinda, training Angolan combatants, equipping them, and helping them head toward the interior of Angola, toward the First Front north of Luanda.

Compañeros [Jorge] Risquet and [Rolando] Kindelán were in charge of this many-sided mission.

The heroic actions by Che’s Column 1 continued for a number of months. They overcame dangerous obstacles to get to the interior of Zaire, where they took part in many clashes in which they were outnumbered.

The service record of Che’s column counts more than 50 combat actions. Using the pseudonym “Tatu,” Che carried these out with the mastery of tactics and strategy that made him a true artist of guerrilla warfare.

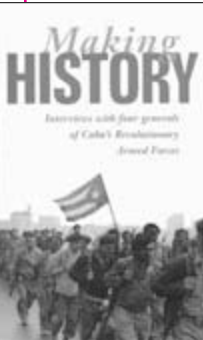
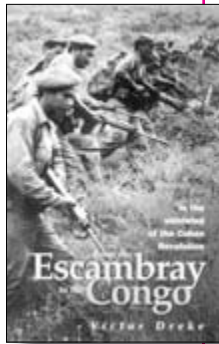
But it was not possible to unite and consolidate the Lumumbist forces. There

Continued on Page 9

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Che: leading the transition to socialism

Below is an excerpt from *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in May. Revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara wrote this article in the form of a letter to the editor of *Marcha*, a weekly published in Montevideo, Uruguay, and it appeared in its March 12, 1965, issue. Copyright © 1989 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

The new society in formation has to compete fiercely with the past. This past makes itself felt not only in the individual consciousness—in which the residue of an education systematically oriented toward isolating the individual still weighs heavily—but also through the very character of this transition period in which commodity relations still persist. The commodity is the economic cell of capitalist society. So long as it exists its effects will make themselves felt in the organization of production and, consequently, in consciousness.

Marx outlined the transition period as resulting from the explosive transformation of the capitalist system destroyed by its own contradictions. In historical reality,

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

however, we have seen that some countries that were weak limbs on the tree of imperialism were torn off first—a phenomenon foreseen by Lenin.

In these countries capitalism had developed sufficiently to make its effects felt by the people in one way or another. But it was not capitalism's internal contradictions that, having exhausted all possibili-



Osvaldo Salas

Che Guevara doing voluntary work in Cuba in early 1960s. Building socialism requires the development of a consciousness with a new scale of values, explained Guevara.

ties, caused the system to explode. The struggle for liberation from a foreign oppressor; the misery caused by external events such as war, whose consequences privileged classes place on the backs of the exploited; liberation movements aimed at overthrowing neocolonial regimes—these are the usual factors in unleashing this kind of explosion. Conscious action does the rest.

A complete education for social labor has not yet taken place in these countries, and wealth is far from being within the reach of the masses through the simple process of appropriation. Underdevelopment, on the one hand, and the usual flight of capital, on the other, make a rapid transition without sacrifices impossible. There remains a long way to go in constructing the economic base, and the temptation is very great to follow the beaten track of material interest as the lever with which to accelerate development.

There is the danger that the forest will not be seen for the trees. The pipe dream that socialism can be achieved with the help of the dull instruments left to us by capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, individual material interest as a lever, etc.) can lead into a blind alley; And you wind up there after having traveled a

long distance with many crossroads, and it is hard to figure out just where you took the wrong turn. Meanwhile, the economic foundation that has been laid has done its work of undermining the development of consciousness. To build communism it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man.

That is why it is very important to choose the right instrument for mobilizing the masses. Basically, this instrument must be moral in character, without neglecting, however, a correct use of the material incentive—especially of a social character....

Socialism is young and has its mistakes. We revolutionaries often lack the knowledge and intellectual daring needed to meet the task of developing the new man with methods different from the conventional ones—and the conventional methods suffer from the influences of the society that created them. (Again the theme of the relationship between form and content is posed.) Disorientation is widespread, and we are absorbed by the problems of material construction. There are no artists of great authority who at the same time have great revolutionary authority. The men of the party must take this task in hand and seek attainment of the main goal: to edu-

cate the people.

What is sought then is simplification, something everyone can understand, something functionaries understand. True artistic inquiry ends, and the problem of general culture is reduced to taking some things from the socialist present and some from the dead (therefore, not dangerous) past. Thus socialist realism arises upon the foundations of the art of the last century.

But the realistic art of the nineteenth century also has a class character, more purely capitalist perhaps than this decadent art of the twentieth century that reveals the anguish of alienated man. In the field of culture capitalism has given all that it had to give, and nothing remains but the stench of a corpse, today's decadence in art.

But why try to find the only valid prescription in the frozen forms of socialist realism? We cannot counterpose "freedom" to socialist realism, because the former does not yet exist and will not exist until the complete development of the new society. But we must not, from the pontifical throne of realism-at-all-costs, condemn all art forms since the first half of the nineteenth century, for we would then fall into the Proudhonian mistake of going back to the past, of putting a strait-jacket on the artistic expression of the man who is being born and is in the process of making himself.

What is needed is the development of an ideological-cultural mechanism that permits both free inquiry and the uprooting of the weeds that multiply so easily in the fertilized soil of state subsidies.

In our country the error of mechanical realism has not appeared, but rather its opposite. And that is so because the need for the creation of a new man has not been understood, a new man who would represent neither the ideas of the nineteenth century nor those of our own decadent and morbid century.

What we must create is the man of the twenty-first century; although this is still a subjective aspiration, not yet systematized. This is precisely one of the fundamental objectives of our study and our work. To the extent that we achieve concrete successes on a theoretical plane—or, vice versa, to the extent that we draw theoretical conclusions of a broad character on the basis of our concrete research—we will have made a valuable contribution to Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of humanity.

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The ‘ownership society’—“Middle-aged Black men are dying at nearly twice the rate of white men of a similar age, reflecting lower in-



Harry Ring

come and poorer access to medical care.”—*L. A. Times*.

Contradictory capitalism—While reporters gathered at the

Arizona-Mexico border to watch a racist gang of vigilantes intent on keeping Mexican immigrants out, the *Wall Street Journal* noted that the moves to beef up the border cops are making some agribusiness tycoons nervous. Tom Nassif, head of the powerful Western Growers Association, told the *Journal* that last fall he asked *la migra* to stop patrolling some of the checkpoints. The border patrol couldn’t have picked a worse time to crack down on foreign-born workers, he said, “Didn’t they know it was lettuce season?”

‘Lettuce superexploit them’—The *Journal* added that “at least

half of the 1.8 million crop workers in the U.S. are undocumented. They sustain the lettuce industry valued at \$30 billion.” Nassif claimed that his industry “could not exist without a foreign workforce.”

U.S. ‘equality for all’—Kuwait has denied that it’s in a dispute with the U.S. on payment due for fuel shipped by Kuwait for U.S. use in neighboring Iraq. An overdue bill sent by Kuwait provoked a huffy response from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. He reminded Kuwait that in 1991 U.S. troops liberated it from Iraqi occupation.

P.S.—A third party has joined

the dispute with Washington. The big-time Haliburton construction company billed the Pentagon \$28.5 million for delivering \$82,000 worth of propane from Kuwait to Iraq. This struck Pentagon auditors as “illogical.” (Dick Cheney was top dog at Haliburton prior to his election as vice prez. But it’s assured that he cut all ties.)

Golden years special—Some “experts” see a crisis for seniors addicted to a gambling. They say retired folks are bored, lonely, and depressed. Responds Judy Patterson, executive director of the American Gambling Ass’n: “There are certainly positive benefits being

active and being among friends.”

Meanwhile, casinos make a special pitch for seniors. For instance, real estate shyster Donald Trump owns a casino in Gary, Indiana. It offers a weekly “Golden Gamers” slot tournament for patrons 50 or over, only.

Includes first strike capacity?—Nestled in the Hollywood Hills, a safe house overlooking Sunset Blvd. The 10-bedroom compound has a “safe core”—described as “a 2,500 square foot area that is effectively impenetrable when activated.” Plus a rooftop heliport. Yours for only \$9.2 million.

40th anniversary of Cuban mission to Congo

Continued from Page 7

came a time when the internationalist column fought alone, in an unknown land. Faced with these adverse circumstances, the column was forced to leave the country. It was not defeated in battle by the enemy, but the objective of its mission became impossible to accomplish given the absence of a structured patriotic movement with which to collaborate.

The Patrice Lumumba Battalion had more favorable conditions. Its support to the progressive Congolese government against foreign threats was firm, and at a certain point decisive.

The Congolese youth militia battalions were organized, trained, and armed, strengthening popular support for the democratic regime. This consolidated the MPLA’s rear guard, enabling it to increase guerrilla actions in the Second Front in Cabinda. Two columns, trained and equipped by Cubans, marched toward the First Front, toward the far-off region of Luanda. One of these columns bore the glorious title, Camilo Cienfuegos Squadron.

This history of internationalist collaboration with the peoples of the Congo and Angola formed a solid base for a new and greater Cuban solidarity act toward the peoples of southern Africa in their fight for liberation.

Thus, in the difficult opening moments of the second Angolan war of liberation, Brazzaville served as a secure rear area for some of our troops, whose brotherhood-in-arms with the MPLA—which began precisely in 1965—has become a factor of considerable importance in preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People’s Republic of Angola.

Stated more clearly, the history of the last 20 years has demonstrated the validity of that mission. It became one of the models for our internationalist calling—which we will never give up—and was a contribution in helping to clear the road of struggle for the peoples of Africa. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba have made their own resolute contribution to this struggle.

In the next few days we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of Angola’s independence and the victory over the mercenary bands and invaders from Zaire and South Africa, who tried, without success, to forestall the triumph of the FAPLA and the MPLA. Since that time, we have contributed all we could to strengthening the Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola to the process of national reconstruction in that sister country. Since its liberation, Angola has enjoyed not one single day of peace due to the attacks from the racist regime of South Africa and the armed bands organized, armed, and financed by them and their allies, the U.S. imperialists.

More than 200,000 Cubans have served on internationalist missions in the sister nation of Angola over the past 10 years. That fact alone tells us a lot, not only about the historical significance of the mission entrusted to you 20 years ago, but also about how much the relationship of forces on a world scale has evolved in favor of the causes of liberation and social progress, and how much our internationalist consciousness has matured.

Twenty years ago more than 300 men made up the two columns we are honoring. The highest praise we can pay to that campaign, which was a precursor, is to say that every one of you has been multiplied

a thousandfold in your pledge to pay back with one’s very life, if necessary, our debt of gratitude to humanity.

There are still two colonies in Africa: the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic and Namibia. The Saharan people are carrying on, under the most difficult conditions, an exemplary struggle against the Moroccan occupation supported by the U.S. government. We are completely confident in the victory of their just cause.

Anti-apartheid struggle

In Namibia, illegally occupied by the South African racists, the people’s rebellion is growing under the leadership of its sole and legitimate representative, SWAPO [Southwest African People’s Organization]. Today, Namibian territory is used by Pretoria as a jumping-off point in its war against Angola. The day is not far off when Namibia’s heroic and long-suffering people, arms in hand, will settle accounts with their oppressors. The battle will be long and hard, closely tied historically to the selfless struggle of the popular masses of South Africa, above all, the Black people led by the ANC [African National Congress].

But the possibility of putting an end to the shameful apartheid regime has never been more certain. Its elimination would definitively guarantee the independence of Namibia, the security of the Front Line states, and peace and progress for southern Africa. Our internationalist contingent in Angola is part of this process through the sovereign will of our two sovereign governments. This is a role that has fallen to Cuba because of what our internationalist support will continue to mean, in the next years, for the consolidation and strengthening of the People’s Republic of Angola, bastion of the revolutionary cause in Africa’s southern cone.

Compañeros:

Several members of Che’s column died gloriously like Che himself did in Bolivia, giving his life as did his compañeros who left their heroic bones in Zairian soil. One, of Haitian origin, died later at the hands of the thugs of the tyranny that has soaked Haiti in blood. Combatants from one or another column died fighting alongside the people of Guinea-Bissau against the Portuguese yoke, alongside the Angolan people confronting the South African invasion, and alongside the Ethiopian people fighting Somali expansionism. More than 30 compañeros from your columns selflessly gave their lives fighting in Africa and the Americas.

In their memory, we lower our flags in admiration and respect.

And before all of you, we offer the tribute of our people and our party, not only for your participation 20 years ago in the missions to Zaire and the Congo, but also for the exemplary stance with which you have honored that great action. This stance finds expression in the more than 120 of you who have carried out at least one other internationalist mission. Dozens of you have carried out three, four, even five in the course of these 20 years.

Right now 10 compañeros are not here at this event because they are far away from our homeland, keeping aloft the beautiful banner of proletarian internationalism. And there is another fact no less eloquent: more than 90 percent of the members of both columns are militants of our glorious party and the rest are also revolutionaries, patriots, and internationalists.

The example all of you have set constantly renews our certainty in the justice of our ideas and our confidence in the capacity of human beings to grow in the face of adversity, and to give the best of themselves for the sake of their people and humanity.

Allow me then, on behalf of the party leadership and Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and to give you a fraternal embrace.

*Mambí refers to fighters in Cuba’s wars of independence from Spain, many of them freed slaves or agricultural workers. These wars took place during 1868–78 and 1895–98. The term “mambí” originated in the 1840s during the fight for independence from Spain in the nearby island of Santo Domingo. After a Black Spanish officer named Juan Ethninius Mamby joined the Dominican independence fighters, Spanish forces began referring to the guerrillas by the derogatory term “mambies.” Later the related term “mambises” was applied to the freedom fighters in Cuba, who adopted it as a badge of honor.



Cuban volunteers in Angola 1981. More than 300,000 Cuban soldiers repelled the invasions of Angola and Namibia by the apartheid army of South Africa, aiding national liberation struggles across the region.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



May 2, 1980

HOUSTON—“Oil firms execs record ‘exceptional’ year in pocketbook” was the headline on the *Houston Chronicle*’s financial page April 10.

The article reported that “the chief executive officers at the nation’s five largest oil companies—Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, Standard of California, and Gulf, in that order—got increases averaging about 16 percent last year, which brought their pay bonuses, on average, to almost \$740,000.”

This was bitter news to members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) still out on strike.

While most oil companies have settled with OCAW, thousands of Texas oil workers remain on the picket line. The longest national oil strike in the country began last January 8.

Throughout the strike, the oil barons have used every means to intimidate and weaken the union, including court suits and injunctions, police harassment, and threats of disciplinary action. Now their fire is concentrated on the group of locals holding out.

At the giant Gulf refinery in Port Arthur, OCAW’s biggest local, 4-23, is hanging tough against the company’s attempt to take severe disciplinary action against some union members.

The membership refuses to consider Gulf’s contract offer until the company agreed to take everyone back. The com-

pany has not met with the union since mid-March.



May 2, 1955

As the strikes of some 80,000 Southern telephone and railroad workers pass their 45th day, there is a growing awareness of their great significance for all organized labor in the U.S.—North and South.

Victory or defeat in these two strikes will not only play a vital role in determining the future of unionism below the Mason-Dixon line but can have a decisive bearing on the mounting number of strikes throughout the country and on the coming negotiations of the auto workers with Ford and General Motors.

In the Southern strikes the corporations have chosen to challenge the very basis of unionism in a fashion that recalls the union-recognition strikes of the early CIO. For example, the Louisville & Nashville railroad and its seven affiliated lines has refused to accept a health-welfare plan awarded by a presidential fact-finding board a year ago.

Eight months of negotiations produced a deadlock between the CIO phone workers and Southern Bell. The latter demanded a no-strike clause, claiming it had suffered 105 wildcat strikes in the past four years. The union agreed on condition that in return a clause for arbitration of all disputes be put in the contract. The telephone monopoly rejected this as an invasion of the “rights of management.”

We’re going bilingual in June!

A message to readers from the editors of the ‘Militant’ and ‘Perspectiva Mundial’

Continued from front page

hand reports on working-class resistance to the employers’ assaults in the United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, Iceland, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere.

The weekly paper will have a single editor and core of regular contributors, including volunteers around the country who help translate articles from English to Spanish as well as from Spanish to English.

The section in Spanish will keep the *Perspectiva Mundial* name and flag. Starting on the back page, it will carry many of the lead news and opinion pieces that appear in the *Militant*.

The new bilingual paper will present the same balance of political coverage and the same working-class perspective to English-speaking workers and to those whose first language is Spanish. That will set it apart from other publications in the workers movement whose Spanish-language pages are largely geared to “Latino issues.”

28-year record

This is in continuity with *Perspectiva Mundial*’s nearly three-decade-long record. Its first issue came off the presses on Jan. 19, 1977. The magazine was launched as a way to reach out to the broad political radicalization that unfolded in the United States in the 1960s and early 1970s. The Chicano liberation movement was on the rise, as was the fight for Puerto Rico’s independence from U.S. colonial rule. These struggles were deeply interconnected with the mass movement for Black rights, the exploding opposition to the U.S. rulers’ war against the Vietnamese people, and the rise of the fight for women’s rights. The victory and advance of the Cuban Revolution at the opening of the 1960s also had a deep and ongoing impact among radicalizing youth. Chicano, Puerto Rican, and other Latin American workers and young people engaged in fights against deportations, for affirmative action, for bilingual education, and other social demands.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Spanish-speaking component of the working class in the United States began a steady expansion, one that exploded in the following two decades with the accelerating immigration from Latin America. Many of these workers became involved in union-organizing drives and other labor battles.

Perspectiva Mundial arose from a Spanish-language section of several pages that was published from 1974 to 1976 in the international socialist newsweekly *Intercontinental Press*. When it was launched in January 1977, it resembled *IP* in its appearance and content, with a focus on international news and analysis.

As it began to be used more and more broadly by socialist workers in the United States, *Perspectiva Mundial* developed a format and style of its own. Its focus shifted somewhat, becoming directed primarily to Spanish-speaking workers in the United States. From the beginning the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* have shared worker-correspondents and other resources, and many *PM* articles have been translated from news and analysis appearing in the *Militant*. In its first decade *PM* was published biweekly, going monthly in late 1986.

Leafing through the pages of *Perspectiva Mundial* over the past 28 years, one can see the wide range of world events and working-class struggles the magazine has covered and been a part of. U.S. labor battles from the victories of the United Farm Workers in the late 1970s and the coal miners’ strike of 1977-78 to the struggles of meat packers in the Midwest today. Demonstrations for a woman’s right to choose abortion. Actions in support of the rights of immigrant workers. The revolution in Iran that toppled the U.S.-backed shah in 1979. Protests against U.S. military intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. The popular movement that swept the racist apartheid regime in South Africa from power. Feature coverage from reporting teams throughout Latin America, as well as Yugoslavia, the Mideast, and the imperialist countries of Europe. Many firsthand reports from revolutionary Cuba.

Anti-Tokyo protests continue in China

Continued from Page 3

War II the Japanese rulers have been greatly hampered in their ability to use these forces to advance their imperialist interests. The Japanese post-war constitution, drafted by Washington, forbids Japan from using its military abroad and requires Tokyo to maintain forces only for “self defense.”

This constitutional clause has been the center of a heated dispute in Japan as the country’s rulers have steadily pressed to use their military forces more aggressively in the region and as part of imperialist interventions in other parts of the world. In 2003, Tokyo sent troops to Iraq as a part of Washington’s “coalition of the willing,” and sent 950 troops to Indonesia—its biggest military operation since the second world war—for tsunami relief

It is this remilitarization that is at the root of the ideological campaign aimed at fanning Nippon nationalism among the Japanese population.

Tensions over Taiwan

This spring the tensions between Tokyo and Beijing

From 1979 to 1990 *Perspectiva Mundial* and the *Militant* maintained a Managua bureau that provided eyewitness coverage of the Nicaraguan revolution, including how Nicaraguan workers and peasants confronted and defeated the U.S.-organized *contra* war in the mid-1980s. For more than a decade, the two publications followed the rise and decline of the workers and peasants government in that country. In addition, the socialist publications had a bureau in Grenada during much of the 1979–83 revolution in that Caribbean country.

Like the *Militant*, *PM* provided ample coverage of the successful lawsuit by the Socialist Workers Party against FBI spying and disruption, including the 1986–87 federal court rulings in its favor. The two publications have made available, in English and Spanish, speeches and writings of revolutionary leaders such as Fidel Castro, Maurice Bishop, and Thomas Sankara. And they have reported consistently on the fight to build a revolutionary workers party in the United States, and the international communist movement that the SWP is part of.

Source of books, pamphlets

In cooperation with Pathfinder Press, material first published in *Perspectiva Mundial* has been used to produce numerous pamphlets and books. These include *La revolución granadina* (The Grenadian revolution) by Maurice Bishop and Fidel Castro, *Sudáfrica: la revolución en camino* (The coming revolution in South Africa) by Jack Barnes, and *Cincuenta años de guerra encubierta: el FBI contra los derechos democráticos* (50 years of covert war: the FBI versus democratic rights) by Larry Seigle. They also include the Spanish-language editions of *Abortion Is A Woman’s Right!* by Pat Grogan and Evelyn Reed, *Peru’s Shining Path* by Martín Koppel, and *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity* by Rafael Cancel Miranda.

Other material published in the magazine includes the introduction to the Pathfinder book *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* by Mary-Alice Waters, and the article “The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop” by Steve Clark, published originally in *New International* no. 6.

Among the most popular features of *Perspectiva Mundial* in recent years has been the serialization of Spanish translations of *The History of American Trotskyism* by James P. Cannon and *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, both now available as Pathfinder books.

The latest book to be serialized is *Teamster Power*, the second in Dobbs’s four-volume series on the 1930s strikes and organizing drive that transformed the U.S. labor movement across the Midwest and beyond. The Spanish translation of the book, *Fuerza Teamster*, will be published by Pathfinder by the end of this year thanks to the efforts of *PM*’s regular contributors and volunteer translators.

The last two chapters of *Teamster Power* will be published in the June *Perspectiva Mundial*, which will be the final issue in its current format.

In the coming weeks the *Militant* will also institute other changes. To make the paper more readable, it will increase the size of its type and the spacing between lines.

After the June issue, *Perspectiva Mundial* subscribers will not miss a beat. They will receive the new bilingual *Militant* for the remainder of their subscription period—four weeks of the *Militant* for each month of *PM*.

Róger Calero, associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, will continue to write for the *Militant*. Following the 2004 presidential election campaign, in which Calero led the Socialist Workers Party ticket, he has also taken increased national leadership responsibilities in the SWP.

Perspectiva Mundial editor Martín Koppel, also a *Militant* staff writer, is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York in the November elections. You will read about the socialist campaign in the pages of the *Militant*—in both English and Spanish.

But don’t just read about it. Join us in campaigning for the working-class alternative in the 2005 elections!

were ratcheted up another notch when the Japanese government signed defense accords with Washington explicitly calling the straits of Taiwan a “common strategic objective” of both imperialist powers. The 100-mile straits separate mainland China from Taiwan, a former province of China. In 1949, with the victory of the Chinese Revolution, the landlord- and capitalist-based forces of the Kuomintang party, led by Chiang Kai-shek, fled to the island and set up a rival government. Since then, the island has been fiercely guarded by Washington and armed to the teeth. It has served as a dagger aimed by imperialism at the Chinese Revolution.

On March 14, the Chinese parliament declared that any move by Taiwan towards formal independence would be grounds for military action by Beijing to defend its sovereignty.

Washington has used the vote in China’s parliament to press for the maintenance of a European arms embargo to prevent China from getting access to strategic weapons. On April 15, the 25 member nations within the European Union pulled back from lifting the 15-year embargo.

Real wages

Continued from front page

hold the line on labor costs are intense.”

At the center of this assault have been the labor unions, which have continued a decades-long decline. In 2004, 12.5 percent of all employed workers belonged to unions, compared to 13.5 percent in 2001 and more than 20 percent in 1983.

The pressure from the bosses and their government against the unions has extended to the public sector, where in the name of “homeland defense” the government has been pressing to weaken the unions. In 2003, over 37 percent of public sector workers belonged to a union; a year later that figure had fallen to 36.4 percent.

This toll has had a disproportionate impact on workers from oppressed nationalities and women. In 2003, the median hourly wage rate of Black men was 73 percent of their white counterparts. For Latino workers that figure was 64 percent.

A snapshot of New York

In New York City real wages declined by 1.5 percent in 2003, according to a report by the NYC Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) released April 12. Real wages fell by 5 percent for New Yorkers the year before. This has translated into workers paying an ever-greater portion of their income to cover the costs of basic needs such as housing.

About half of New Yorkers live in “affordable housing,” the RGB reports. The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as rent that can be paid with no more than 30 percent of household income. In addition, a quarter of those who rent an apartment in New York turn over more than half of their income to the landlord. “In order to afford a two-bedroom apartment,” according to the RGB, “a full-time worker must earn \$19.58 per hour, or \$40,720 a year. Alternately, those who earn minimum wage would have to work the equivalent of 131 hours a week (or two people residing together would have to work 65.5 hours a week) to be able to afford a two-bedroom unit.”

For many there is no “affordable” housing: they move in with relatives, share apartments with other families, or find roommates.

An article in the April 17 *New York Times* highlighted one of the trends that has resulted from these pressures: the growing number of households in the city—some 9,000-plus—made up of people 60 years of age or older who are living with unrelated boarders or roommates. “Such partnerships are typically accidental,” said the *Times* article. “Sometimes, all it takes is a sudden slip on the stairs, and a hospitalization, draining finances and options. Sometimes, all it takes is an eviction notice from a landlord who wants to ride a hot real estate market.”

Eugene Swierczynski, 57, worked as a carpenter until he fell off a ladder and became disabled. He lived in a homeless shelter before renting a room for \$400 a month from Irena Schafhauser, 77, in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. She needed the income because she had fallen down the stairs of the four-story walk-up apartment building a couple of years earlier and was unable to keep her job at a doctor’s office.

Their stories are typical of those covered in the article, in which the roommates often end up pooling Social Security checks, disability payments, and food stamps in order to stay off the street. “They usually talk about how Irena is battling the landlord, who wants to evict them, renovate the rent-regulated apartment and charge someone else more money,” reported the *Times*. “About how the government is cutting her benefits to \$547 a month from \$666, and is pushing Eugene to go to health clinic he does not want to go to.”

Rising gasoline prices make up a large share of inflationary pressures. Wholesale energy prices increased by 3.3 percent in the month of March, the Labor Department reported April 19. This resulted in higher prices at the pumps for working people, reaching an average of \$2.33 per gallon in the state of New York, the *New York Post* reported, a 20 percent increase over the year before.

The drop in purchasing power for workers and farmers that occurred last year was the first in a decade, but followed a 30-year trend that has meant a steady decline in the standard of living of working people.

In the three decades following the Second World War, when Washington gained unrivaled dominance over other imperialist powers, the employing class could afford to concede regular wage increases to sections of the working class in exchange for labor peace.

By the early 1970s, however, the postwar boom had ended and the curve of capitalist development dipped downward. At the root of this turn was the decline in the average rate of industrial profits.

The deep recession of 1974-75 brought a sharp increase in unemployment and an intensified employer attack on workers’ wages and conditions. Beginning with the take-backs Chrysler imposed on autoworkers in 1979, the bosses rammed through massive cuts that drove down actual take-home pay—before inflation was even taken into account.

For a five-year period in the late 90s, workers were able to reverse the wage trend as the booming “bubble economy” of the 90s increased employment and workers’ confidence to fight for higher wages. This ended with the recession in 2001, and wages resumed their 30-year downward slide.

This offensive by the employers has not only produced a fall in real wages, but a decline in medical and pension coverage, the value and duration of unemployment benefits, and the availability and real worth of workmen’s compensation for those injured on the job.

The Popular Front

Continued from Page 6

was left to sometime in the future. After the monarchy was overthrown in February 1917, the Mensheviks joined the provisional government in a coalition with the liberal capitalists (Cadets) and middle-class Social Revolutionaries.

In contrast, the Bolsheviks called on workers, in alliance with peasants, to organize—independently of all bourgeois forces—around a program of immediate, democratic, and transitional demands that pointed the road toward political power. They opposed the provisional government and advocated a fight for power by the soviets—elected councils of workers, soldiers, and peasants that had arisen during the revolution. In October 1917 the Bolsheviks led the insurrection in which the capitalist regime was toppled and workers and peasants established their own government based on the soviets. Capitalist-landlord rule was overturned, the old state apparatus dismantled, and a new kind of state established: a workers state.

In 1919, at the initiative of the Bolsheviks, the Communist (Third) International was founded. It was made up of the newly formed communist parties in countries around the world that, inspired by the October 1917 victory, had broken with the class-collaborationist misleadership of the social-democratic parties (the Second International) and set out to follow the revolutionary road of the workers and peasants of Russia.

At its third and fourth congresses, in 1921 and 1922, the Communist International dealt extensively with the strategy of the road to power, based on the revolutionary experiences of the recent years. This included the tactic of the united front, aimed at influencing the mass of workers still in the ranks of the reformist parties. The “Theses on Tactics” adopted by the Fourth Congress presented a revolutionary alternative to the course of the social-democrats, who were participating in capitalist governments in Germany and other countries.

“To the coalition between the bourgeoisie and the Social Democracy, whether it be open or concealed,” the theses explained, “the Communists counterpose the united front of all workers and the political and economic coalition of all workers parties against bourgeois power, in order to overthrow the latter once and for all.”

The theses said “the united front tactic is simply an initiative whereby the Communists propose to join with all workers belonging to other parties and groups and all unaligned workers in a common struggle to defend the immediate, basic interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie.”

The Fourth Congress also took up the demand for a workers and farmers government. This slogan, based on the political independence of working people from all capitalist parties, pointed to overturning the bourgeois state.

“The slogan of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government, by extending the basis of the tactic of the united front,” the theses stated, “is the path to the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

In other words, the communist movement in Lenin’s time explicitly opposed the course—advocated in 1935 by Stalin and Dimitrov and today by the CPUSA

and YCL—of workers backing electoral or governmental alliances with capitalist parties. The demand for a workers and farmers government, on the other hand, remains valid and useful today as part of a revolutionary strategy.

Germany: what led to victory of fascism

By the mid-1920s, however, a rising bureaucratic caste, whose main spokesperson became Joseph Stalin, had begun to dominate the Soviet Union. The Stalin leadership, concerned with preserving the material privileges of that middle-class layer, reversed the working-class internationalist course of the Bolsheviks and gutted the proletarian democratic functioning of the Communist International. Class struggle was replaced with class collaboration and internationalism with a narrow national outlook.

The fight to maintain the revolutionary course of the Bolsheviks against this growing political counterrevolution, initiated by Lenin in the last months of his political life in 1922-23, was continued by Leon Trotsky and other Bolshevik leaders. By the early 1930s, however, the bureaucratic caste had consolidated its hold on the degenerated workers state.

The policies imposed on the Comintern shifted arbitrarily according to the narrow diplomatic needs of the bureaucracy in Moscow. Until 1928 collaboration was ordered with liberal and reformist politicians who might help secure diplomatic recognition of the Soviet regime by capitalist governments. Then, at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, the Stalinists proclaimed the “third period,” an ultraleft course of political adventurism and sectarian “red unions” based on the prediction that capitalism had entered the period of its imminent demise.

As part of this abrupt reversal, the Stalinists rejected the united front policy developed by the Comintern in Lenin’s time. The social-democratic parties were labeled “social fascists,” following Stalin’s dictum that social democracy and fascism were “not antipodes but twins.” Of course, there could be no united front with social fascists, who were considered the “main enemy.”

The *Dynamic* article by Lewis asserts that the 1935 Popular Front line was based on learning from the experience of the German Communist Party, which had focused on attacking its opponents in the workers movement “instead of organizing a United Front against the Nazi Party.”

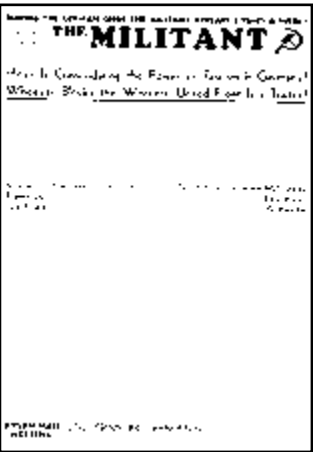
What Lewis conveniently omits, however, is that the German CP policy was not unique to the Stalinists in that country. Opposition to the united front was the “third period” line that Moscow imposed on all Communist Parties—including on the CPUSA.

In the 1932 U.S. elections, for example, the CP denounced Democrat Franklin Roosevelt as the “fascist” candidate and Socialist Party leader Norman Thomas as the “social fascist” candidate. Just four years later, following the new Popular Front line, the CP campaigned for the reelection of Roosevelt, now proclaimed an “antifascist.”

This sectarian course had its most disastrous results in Germany. The leaders of the mass Social Democratic and Communist parties rejected a united workers



Nazi storm troopers, above, take over union headquarters in Berlin in 1933 and arrest its leaders without resistance. At left, front page of the *Militant* shortly after Hitler came to power that year. The socialist paper came out three times a week to sound the alarm against the fascist danger.



front to combat the growing National Socialist movement. They divided the workers

movement, allowing the fascists to come to power without a struggle.

German CP: ‘After Hitler, our turn’

In the 1920s and early 1930s, imperialist Germany was shaken by growing economic crisis, including mass unemployment and ruinous hyperinflation, which fueled sustained working-class struggles and a revolutionary upsurge in 1923. At the same time, the deep social crisis and the lack of revolutionary working-class leadership led to the rise of the fascist National Socialist German Workers Party, or Nazis.

Fascism is a radical petty-bourgeois movement in the streets, backed and financed by growing sections of the ruling class. Its leaders appeal to desperate middle-class layers by railing against “high finance” and the bankers, lacing their nationalist demagoguery with anticapitalist rhetoric.

Fascism is not something historically different in class terms from a capitalist regime. It is not an alternative to “democratic capitalism”—as liberals and Stalinists would have us believe—but is bred by “democratic capitalism” in times of sharp crisis in order to maintain the rule of the bourgeoisie. This was the nature of the Nazis in Germany and of the fascists in Italy and other countries in Europe.

The German Communist Party, however, portrayed fascism as nothing but capitalist reaction, while indiscriminately labeling various reactionary bourgeois politicians as “fascists.” By blurring the differences, the Stalinists disoriented workers as to the danger that the National Socialists represented and how to combat them.

Under the impact of the social crisis, the Nazis grew rapidly. Between 1928 and 1930, the votes they received in the elections mushroomed by 700 percent, to 6.4 million. By the end of 1930, the Nazi Party’s storm troops numbered 100,000.

The working class in Germany, the most powerfully organized in the capitalist world, could have taken on and defeated the fascists. In the 1930 elections the Social Democratic Party (SPD) won 8.6 million votes and Communist Party 4.6 million—a combined total of 13.2 million, in a country of 65 million inhabitants. Workers were organized into powerful trade unions, and the SPD even had a mass defense organization, the Reichsbanner.

But the CP, blinded by its factionalism and following Moscow’s ukase, refused to campaign for a united front with the SPD and the trade unions in order to take on the Nazi goon squads in combat. Instead, the German Communist Party targeted the Social Democrats as the main enemy, calling them “social fascists.”

As the Communist and Socialist parties remained paralyzed, the fascist gangs stormed union halls and carried out other brazen physical assaults on the workers movement.

In 1931, when the Nazis launched a referendum to oust the SPD-led coalition government in Prussia, the Communist Party went so far as to give the Social Democrats an ultimatum: form a united front with us at once, or we will make one with the Nazis. When the SPD leaders rejected the proposal, the CP joined with the fascists campaigning for what the Stalinists called the “red

referendum.” This further emboldened the Nazi thugs.

Seeking to resolve the social crisis in their favor, the German ruling class increasingly turned to the National Socialists, who came to power in 1933.

In the 1932 elections the SPD, frightened by the Nazi upsurge, supported Paul von Hindenburg, a reactionary former Prussian field marshal, as a lesser evil to Hitler. Then, in January 1933, Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor of Germany.

The following month the *Reichstag* (parliament) was set on fire by Nazis. Hitler’s regime used this incident as the pretext to arrest thousands of workers and ban socialist and communist newspapers. The Reichstag gave Hitler dictatorial powers.

After the Nazis had come to power, however, the Stalinists boasted that Hitler’s victory would soon give way to a socialist revolution, declaring, “After Hitler, our turn!”

While the Stalinized Comintern remained silent, the Nazi-led regime proceeded to crush the unions and annihilate the German Communist Party.

The capitulation of the German Communists and Social Democrats allowed the fascists to take power without a fight—the greatest defeat for the working class in the 20th century.

Trotsky’s call for united front

In contrast to the Stalin-led Communist International, the communist forces led by Leon Trotsky sounded the alarm from the beginning on the impending showdown between fascism and the workers movement. They explained what the fascist movement was and agitated for a united front of the Social Democratic and Communist Parties to defeat it. Trotsky wrote articles in 1931 such as “Germany, the key to the international situation” and “For a workers’ united front against fascism.” These and other articles were published in the *Militant* and its sister publications around the world. These can be found in the pamphlet *Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It* and the book *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, both published by Pathfinder Press.

With the acceleration of the class struggle in Germany after Hitler’s appointment as chancellor, the predecessor of the Socialist Workers Party, the Communist League of America (CLA), stepped up its campaign to mobilize working people against the fascist danger. The CLA sponsored a series of mass meetings, including one in New York in February 1933 attended by 500 people, on “The Meaning of the German events,” which featured CLA national secretary James P. Cannon.

During this period the weekly *Militant* was brought out three times a week with the slogan “The United Front of the Workers’ Organizations and the Battle to the Death!”

The U.S. Communist Party, however, rejected this call for a united front, calling the CLA “social fascist.”

The historic defeat in Germany and the destruction of the Communist Party there by the Nazi-led regime prompted a belated shift by the Kremlin in 1934-35. Instead of returning to the Leninist tactic of the workers’ united front, however, the Stalinists moved to support “democratic” capitalist governments under the slogan of an “anti-fascist people’s front.”

The meaning of the Popular Front line, and how it was applied in France and Spain, will be the subject of a subsequent article.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Defend Free Speech and Freedom of the Press. Speaker: John Studer, Political Rights Defense Fund. Sat. April 30. Dinner 6:30 p.m., program 7:30 p.m. Call for location: (773) 890-1190.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Lumumba: The Death of the Prophet. Documentary. Fri. April 22. Dinner 7 p.m., program 8 p.m. 307 W. 36th St. 10 flr (north elevators) (212) 629-6649.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Behind the Mass Actions in China and Korea Against Japanese Imperialism. Speaker: Lea Sherman, SWP. Sat. April 23, 7:30 p.m. 3717-B Georgia Ave NW (Georgia/Petworth Metro Stop). (202) 722-1315.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Celebrate New Issues of New International: Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun and Our Politics Start With the World. Sat. April 30. Speaker: Ron Poulson, Communist League. Reception 6 p.m., program 6:30 p.m. 3/281-7 Beamish St, Campsie.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Why the New Zealand Rulers Celebrate Anzac Day: the Truth About World War I and II. Fri. April 29, 7 p.m. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu (upstairs) (09) 276-8885.

SWEDEN

Stockholm

60 Years Since World War II, There Is No Peace: The Imperialist Slaughter and Stalinist Betrayals. Speaker: Björn Tirsén, Communist League. Fri. April 29, 7 p.m. SEK40 Bjulevägen 33, Stureby (08) 316933

U.S. auto giants face crisis of overproduction

Unemployment rises in Michigan as plants shut down, hiring stagnates

BY ILONA GERSH

DETROIT—Despite offering steep rebates, scores of zero interest and zero down payment financing deals, and other enticements, U.S. automakers are facing a crisis of overproduction, as intensifying competition has reduced their profit rates and left thousands of unsold vehicles languishing in lots.

The auto bosses have been driving to take this profit crisis out on their workforce by slashing jobs and demanding wage and benefit concessions. Meanwhile, the financial troubles of these monopolies are having a deep impact on the economy in the region and sending a shudder down the spines of bankers, stockjobbers, and other capitalists whose fates are intertwined with theirs.

Production cuts and plant closings by General Motors and Ford this month have added to an already ailing economy in Michigan. The official unemployment rate in Detroit was 14 percent in 2004, up from 9.8 percent in 2001. More than 200,000 factory jobs have been eliminated in the state since 2000, bringing the statewide unemployment rate to 7.1 percent, two points above the national average.

In March, GM announced it would lose \$2 billion in cash this year, instead of an earlier projection that its cash flow would increase by that amount. The auto giant's stock plummeted to a 12-year low in April. Both GM and Ford cut production by 10 percent in the first quarter of 2005. Currently about one-third of the two automakers' sales go to their own employees, their family and friends, or to rental companies and corporate fleets at razor-thin profit margins, the *New York Times* reported.

The sagging stock values have a broad impact. The Michigan Department of Treasury is a major holder of auto stocks, including 1.2 million GM shares and 2.4 million Ford shares. The state government of Michigan is one of three states with deficit budgets, and is already slashing education, medical benefits, and road repair budgets.

Crisis of overproduction

As competition has intensified, GM and Ford have steadily lost a considerable share of the U.S. auto sales market. Auto monopolies based in Asia have captured 31 percent of the U.S. market, while the combined share of U.S. auto giants sank to a new low of 58.7 percent, according to Autodata Corp. Chrysler—majority-owned by German automaker Daimler—is the only U.S. auto manufacturing company that increased its market share last year, with a 4 percent gain.

To reduce their massive stockpile of unsold cars that sit on the lot, GM, Ford, and Chrysler sank \$60 billion into rebates last year, but saw a less than one percent raise in sales as a result. Discounts averaged \$4,000.

Now, GM is closing and temporarily idling assembly plants in an attempt to reduce a huge surplus of 1.3 million cars and trucks that are sitting on dealers' parking lots and on state land.

GM's 85-year-old assembly plant in Lansing, Michigan, which makes the Chevrolet Classic and Pontiac Grand Am, will be closed in May. More than 3,000 production workers will be laid off. The company says most of them will eventually be hired to work in a new GM plant that is expected to start production in 2006.

Later this year, GM plans to shut old plants in Baltimore, Maryland, and Linden, New Jersey. But some analysts say this is not enough. More than 40 percent of GM's capacity is either idle or produces low-profit-margin vehicles primarily destined for rental companies, the *Detroit News* reported.

Short-term GM and Ford plant closings are common. The 500 production workers



Militant/Ilona Gersh

Under the weight of a glut of cars coming off the assembly lines, an auto dealer in Lincoln Park, Michigan, offers cars at \$1 down to move them off the lot.

at GM's Chevrolet SSR plant in Lansing returned to work in March from a six-week layoff to learn the plant would be shut down again for two weeks in April.

Bosses squeeze the union

In addition to eliminating jobs and restructuring production by closing old non-profitable plants, the U.S. auto companies are driving to cut costs by pressing for concessions on benefits and wages from their workforce.

The United Auto Workers (UAW) union agreed March 20 to allow Chrysler to charge workers in its U.S. plants annual deductibles of between \$100 and \$1,000 for health care that had previously been fully covered. The move affects 35,000 workers and retirees.

The medical benefits were renegotiated under a 1982 clause in the national contract between Chrysler and the UAW that allows Chrysler to reduce health coverage if the

company's health costs increase substantially. This year the clause was invoked for the first time.

Chrysler plans to invest \$506.8 million to renovate two auto plants in Sterling Heights, a northern suburb, the *News* reported. State and city government officials have granted the company \$37 million in tax breaks. The company announced it has reached an agreement with the UAW that would allow it to introduce "team-based work rules" similar to those employed by Japanese auto manufacturers. The new work rules eliminate job classifications, allowing the bosses to speed up production and reduce the workforce.

GM was not successful this time around in wresting health-care concessions of a similar scope from its workers. Following an annual meeting with GM bosses in April, UAW officials announced that the union would not reopen the contract

to hike health-care costs. But the union has allowed the auto giant to renege on an agreement to replace 6,800 workers who have retired, quit, or been fired. Eldon Renaud, president of UAW Local 2164 in Bowling Green, Kentucky, said the job concessions were "a greater savings to GM than the cost of health care."

Parts manufacturers follow suit

Facing a similar profit crisis, auto parts manufacturers are pursuing similar cutbacks and concessions from their workers. In December Standard and Poor's lowered parts manufacturer Delphi's credit rating to junk status. Delphi has closed five factories in other countries and is closing four U.S. plants.

Visteon was rated at junk status a year ago, and is now rated at BB+, below investment grade. Junk bond status means that loans cost millions of dollars in finance charges, often pushing businesses to file bankruptcy. Losses at Visteon have eliminated all but \$434 million of its original net worth in 2000 of \$3.58 billion, reported the *Detroit Free Press*.

These companies were spun off from GM and Ford five years ago as part of an effort by the auto giants to increase productivity and weaken the union. At that time the UAW negotiated a contract that included the same rate of pay at Visteon as the workers in assembly plants. Last year, though, the union agreed to concessions that reduced wages and benefits for new hires by as much as 65 percent. Visteon has negotiated an agreement to further cut payments to its 17,700 Ford workers by another \$25 million a month through the rest of 2005.

Nearly 5,000 workers were laid off by Delphi in Michigan last year. The company plans to cut another 8,500 jobs worldwide in 2005.

Quebec students score gains through strike

BY AIMEE KENDERGIAN

MONTREAL—Following a six-week strike, Quebec university, college, and high school students won a partial but important victory in their struggle to get the Quebec government to reinstate Can\$103 million (Can\$1=US\$0.83) in student grants that it had slashed from the education budget. At its height, the strike involved 230,000 students and won the support of the big majority of working people in Quebec. Tens of thousands of students and their supporters participated in daily picket lines, demonstrations, and protest actions in February and March.

On April 1, the Federation of Quebec University Students (FEUQ) and the Federation of Quebec College Students (FECQ) negotiated an agreement with the provincial government that will reinstate the full \$103 million within two years for a four-year period. Next year \$70 million of the funds will be restored. As part of the agreement, the federal government will transfer funds from another education program to the grants program.

"It is a victory," Véronique Pronovost, a student at André Laurendeau College, told the *Militant*. "We said that we were doing it for others, and the students after us will get the money." Véronique Clermont, a student at the University of Montreal, also supported the settlement, but added, "I think it's a shame that the federal government took money from another program to give us what they had taken away."

Although the Association for Broad Student Union Solidarity Coalition (CASSEE) representing over 50,000 students, had initiated the strike action, it was excluded from the negotiations with the government. It rejected the agreement and continued the strike for an extra week. At a meeting on

the April 9–10 weekend, CASSEE's leadership decided to recommend ending the strike while still rejecting the agreement. "The relationship of forces was not favorable for continuing," said CASSEE spokesperson Héloïse Moysan-Lapointe. "The students saw the contempt that the elected representatives have for the population."

Pier-André Bouchard, the president of the FEUQ, told the media that in addition to winning the funding, the students "are now conscious of the importance of the political aspect, of mobilizing." This lesson will be important in the coming months, he added, "because we have a government that is talking about ending the freeze on tuition fee hikes. We will definitely not let our guard down, [the government] will still have us in its way." Quebec students have the lowest tuition fees in the country. Previous mobilizations won a freeze on tuition fee increases.

Education is a major question in Quebec. Teachers and school support staff have begun rotating strikes demanding a contract settlement by June. They have been without a contract since 2003. On May 6 teachers



March 24 mobilization of striking students in Quebec called by the Association for Broad Student Union Solidarity Coalition (CASSEE).

and support staff from across the province will go out on strike and join in a mass demonstration in front of the Quebec National Assembly buildings in Quebec City, the capital of the province.